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JULY 28, 1936

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Whither Townsendism?

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JULY 28, 1936

Republican Relief

IF American voters want to know what unemployment relief will be like under Landon, let them turn to Republican New Jersey. That state has already put into operation the plank formally included in the G.O.P. platform to return "responsibility for relief administration to non-political local agencies."

According to a thorough and well-documented report of the American Association of Social Workers, food allowances in the majority of Jersey communities are now "from 50 to 75 percent below the minimum subsistence allowance granted during the period when the State Emergency Relief Administration was functioning." In nineteen communities persons on relief are working for food allowances—not cash—at the rate of 20 cents an hour. In ten communities persons without dependents are denied relief altogether, and in other areas whole families are excluded from aid for such reasons as "suspected resources" or because relief officers believe "they could find work."

Ten Jersey communities deny relief to residents of less than five years, no matter how destitute, and three rule out all aliens. In twenty-five areas no rent payments are made out of relief funds, no gas or fuel is provided for cooking in twenty-six districts, no electricity in thirty, and no clothing in fifteen. Twenty-eight communities bar relief to any family in which one person is employed, even if the amount earned is utterly insufficient to maintain minimum standards; and three districts send uniformed police to investigate all applicants for relief.

New Jersey's ruthless policy is the policy of the Republican Party. It finds its most eloquent champion in that leading G.O.P. mouthpiece, the New York Herald Tribune, which had been running a series of articles on how New Jersey broke "the relief trust" and introduced common sense into the relief situation. "Jersey Relief Cost Cut in Half as Citizens Do Job; N. Y. Urged to Follow" reads the head over one of these articles, in which their author, Emmet Crozier, says baldly: "For every case of 'slow starvation' in the



"Landon'll learn you boondogglers not to get sick!"

Ned Hilton

state today, due to local emergency, there are scores of men and women who have been rescued from an easy and futile existence on the dole."

A Republican Senate did its best to inflict Jersey "relief" on Pennsylvania. Reactionary forces are pushing toward the same goal in New York and elsewhere. The Landon forces have neatly hamstrung relief in Kansas pending the long-drawn-out passage of an amendment to the state constitution. Unemployment relief under Roosevelt has been inadequate—in some cases shamefully so. Under Landon it would be all but non-existent.

Menus

FROM the New York World-Telegram of July 15:

Donald Hastie, 3, whose father, James Hastie, lost his job with the Na-

tional Battery Co. in North Bergen, January, lay dead today in the barrack Hastie tenement at 1203 Willow Avenue, Hoboken. He died at St. Mary Hospital of malnutrition and lead poisoning.

"We didn't have enough to eat after the State ended relief payments, and that's when Donald started going around and picking paint off the wall and eating it," said Mrs. Hastie. "Yes, I used to spend ten or fifteen minutes picking paint out of his teeth," said the dead child's mother. "But I couldn't stop him. He was always so hungry."

From the New York World-Telegram of July 16:

Interfering advisers who say that people should slow up on thick steaks and other rich foods after they pass fifty might put in a puzzling forty minutes staring at hale and hearty Charles

wab, seventy-four-year-old steel mag-e, as he tucks in his napkin and les down for his lunch in the trop-garden atmosphere of the Fantasy om at Larue Restaurant. A scout o, from a neighboring table, had n spying on the genial millionaire, orts that Mr. Schwab's noon meal ically consists of eight clams, a vl of chowder, a thick steak smoth-d with onions and potatoes, vege-le salad, coffee, and a rich dessert.

Whither the League?

WILL the end of the League of Nations be the outcome of the withdrawal of sanctions against Italy? The question may be answered be- lie long in the actions of the League ivers on current threats against peace, ing mainly from Nazi Germany. e d the final determination of British icy, whose present contradictory ten- cies are so lucidly discussed by R. me Dutt elsewhere in this issue, may ve decisive in shaping the answer. b As if he intended to corroborate rl Radek's analysis of the Austro-rman agreement, Hitler has fol- ed up his gains in Central Europe the Nazis' formal repudiation of the nzig constitution, for which the it ague of Nations is authorized to act 'h guarantor. If the League does not or ervene, the German annexation of ov nzig is left to hinge only on Poland's on- ction, with the distinct possibility Ant Hitler may strike a bargain with pol r. Beck.

den The Baldwin cabinet, after a typical Pal play of sheepishness and hesitancy, pros agreed to conversations with France and Belgium on what is to be Ka one about Hitler's remilitarization of Gene Rhineland. The French are striv- oing to rebuild and implement a collec- ytive barrier against German aggression D—a barrier made necessary by the de- struction of the Locarno Pact. Though Britain's position toward the French n- proposals has not yet been announced, Dshe has shown little readiness to cooper- ate, and pro-Nazi British leaders are thurging that she throw her weight Nagainst any measure which would strengthen collective security and the dFranco-Soviet accord, while seeking to hpave the way for Hitler's proposed dWestern Pact. That pact would give dHitler a free hand aagainst the U.S.S.R.

WHILE the three-power conversa- tions are taking place, Europe will still be staggering from the impact

of the Austro-German accord—an ominous warning of what lies in store if the hamstringing of collective secur- ity is allowed to continue. This new war alignment between Germany and Italy, threatening the status quo—and British interests—in Central Europe is a stunning reply to those British states- men who argued that sanctions be lifted in order to keep Mussolini away from Hitler. Certain French diplomats, too, have been the victims of unrequited love—for despite their weak sanctions policy, Mussolini has veered sharply toward Hitler and will not as much as attend the present talks on the Rhine- land occupation.

The fate of the League is of no small concern to humanity. The very efforts of Hitler to destroy it, ineffec- tual as the League has been made through the policies of some of its members, are a tribute to its possibili- ties as a peace instrument. It is to be hoped that the desire of the peace- loving masses of Europe will make itself plainly felt in the consideration of the Rhineland and Danzig questions. This desire is strongly for a League of Nations strengthened on the basis of genuine collective security against ag- gressors.

Unfit to Print?

WHEN a court bites a labor law, it's news. But when it bites a publisher, that's merely back-page filler. Last December, District Court Judge Otis, out in Kansas City, decided that the Wagner Labor Relations Act and its offspring, the National Labor Rela- tions Board, were unconstitutional. Now there are hundreds of district court judges, and their verdicts have only a passing importance, but to the capitalist press the Otis decision was big news. No less than eight stories streamed out over the A.P. wires, and both A.P. and U.P. sent the entire de- cision over their tickers. The story got front-page columns in all the leading dailies, and the Press Radio Bureau put the item on the air.

Last week a Circuit Court of Ap- peals, second only to the United States Supreme Court, upheld the Wagner Act. In a unanimous decision it sus- tained the N.L.R.B.'s order for the reinstatement of Morris Watson, A.P. staff writer who had been dismissed for his activities as vice-president of the American Newspaper Guild. The A.P. gave the story 250 words. The U.P., in a burst of professional courtesy, ig-

nored the decision completely. Of the major New York dailies, only the Post gave the story front-page space. The Times buried it on Page 13. The Herald Tribune assigned it to Page 7 and referred in its head to the "Watson Case" rather than the A.P. The World-Telegram hid it in a late edition, and the reactionary Sun spurned it alto- gether. The Press Radio Bureau, when asked why it failed to mention the de- cision in its broadcast, termed it a local affair, without national significance. Yet newspaper publishers condemn the Guild on the ground that unionized reporters might color the news!

Wells and Malraux

THE outstanding figures in literary Europe recently gathered in Lon- don to attend the congress of the Inter- national Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture. The aim of this association is to preserve all that is best in human culture against the assault of the barbarians. Julien Benda, famous French critic, summed up one aspect of the London congress when he said: "We must preserve those parts of our culture which are national, but not those which are nationalist."

André Malraux, leading novelist of young France, urged that culture be rescued from its tombs in museums and libraries for the sake of the people. He also proposed that the association pre- pare a big encyclopedia, a project sug- gested to him by Maxim Gorky and already supported by writers in many countries. H. G. Wells, present at the congress, said such an encyclopedia would cost too much, hinted at several millions.

"The cost of three battleships!" Malraux replied.

Wells left the congress, but Rebecca West, speaking for the English writers, supported the proposal for an encyclo- pedia. The British press reports that one of the most remarkable speeches in reply to the skeptical Wells was made by Ilya Ehrenbourg, famous Soviet novelist and special European corre- spondent for THE NEW MASSES.

New Champions

IN the midst of the Nazi govern- ment's official crowing over the defeat of Joe Louis, a dozen Negro ath- letes have emerged from the American Olympic tryouts with smashing per- formances. The astonishing Jesse Owens has won three events, Cornelius

Johnson and David Albritton have broken the world's record for the high jump, young Woodruff has taken the 800-meter run, Williams the 400. To these champs, add Pollard, LuValle, Brooks, and the others who sailed on the Manhattan. The Negro athletes are equipped to strike a telling blow at the racial superiority theories of their prospective hosts. Naturally, for the brief duration of the games, these theories will be laid on the shelf, their practical effects carefully camouflaged. The elaborate program of deception which has been outlined would be sufficient to dazzle groups less impressionable than American college athletes on vacation. They will be taken through the Reichstag and shown exactly how those incendiary Communists had planned to raze the building and why it was necessary for the forces of law and order to take matters into their own hands. Berlin houses have been repainted, streets scrubbed, statues jugged around to show that things are in tip-top shape and would the visitors please return to their homes and tell their friends not to worry about unfounded canards in respect to concentration camps, anti-Semitic persecutions, blood purges, secret-service terror, and such. Past masters at kidding the public, the Nazis are now concentrating on kidding a few thousand athletes and

officials. Just how successful they will be in proving to Jesse Owens that Negroes can't run as fast as white men will be interesting to observe.

Free Simpson!

EXACTLY one year and one month from the time of his arrest, Lawrence Simpson is scheduled to go to trial in the Nazi "People's Court." It was in June, 1935, that Hitler storm troopers boarded the American steamer Manhattan, tied up at Hamburg, broke into Simpson's locker, and dragged the American seaman off the ship. No formal charge was made, although officials intimated they had found anti-Nazi literature in Simpson's possession. For a year he was held in a concentration camp near Hamburg, without a semblance of a hearing, and has now been transferred to the infamous Moabit Prison in Berlin to await trial.

The charge against Simpson has still to be made public. The American State Department has a copy of the indictment but its chief for western-European Affairs, James Clement Dunn, refuses to reveal its nature for "diplomatic reasons." It is intimated, however, that the charges involve a number of Germans and that the stage is being set for another Nazi "treason" festival.

Mr. Dunn assures Simpson's father

that the American consulate will take every step to assure a fair trial, but in view of the State Department's record in this case, the assurance has a hollow sound. For a year the department has permitted an American citizen to remain in a concentration camp without a trial. It has stood by with a seemingly determined indifference while the Nazis denied the defendant the right to select counsel offered to him by the International Labor Defense. Simpson must accept Nazi lawyers, who will "defend" him behind closed doors.

The State Department is not as impotent as at times it would have one believe. Despite its apparent unwillingness to incur Nazi antagonism, it is clearly its duty to insist on Simpson's right to select his own attorney and to see that the entire record of the case is made available to counsel for the defense.

Vanquishing Victor

THE Radio Corporation of America is apparently no match for its workers. Production during the current strike has been cut 75 percent. Work on the 35-cent disks has been entirely suspended. The Montgomery, Ward "Conqueror" line of records has had to be farmed out by R.C.A. to its chief rival, the American Record Company of Bridgeport, Conn., which makes Columbia and Brunswick disks in its non-union shops. Production has been stopped on the new R.C.A.-Victor radio line, except for dealers' samples, and such records as are produced are reported to be of poor quality. Worst of all, Decca, R.C.A.'s rival in the popular record field, reports the biggest month's business in its history.

The jolt has been too much for R.C.A. It had to cry for help—and help has been forthcoming. Camden officials, rushing to the rescue, have resorted to mass arrest of pickets and the imposition of outrageous bail. At present 101 pickets are in jail, unable to meet bail amounting to \$523,000, an average of more than \$5,000 for each prisoner. A number of sharp skirmishes have taken place near the plant, in one of which ammonia bombs and acid were hurled from the windows, inflicting serious injuries on several pickets.

The Camden strikers are not easily downed. Plans have been drafted to continue the picketing in even greater numbers. R.C.A. would already be licked if it were not for Camden's lawless judges.

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EDITORS:

M. R. BENDINER, JOSEPH FREEMAN, MICHAEL GOLD, RUSSELL T. LIMBACH, BRUCE MINTON, ARNOLD REID, ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, ALEXANDER TAYLOR, MARGUERITE YOUNG

Contributing Editors: GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, LOREN MILLER

WILLIAM BROWDER, Business Manager

WILLIAM RANDORF, Circulation Manager

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The Mexican Strike

THE New York Times never fails us. This week, for instance, its Mexican correspondent quotes *La Prensa* at great length as giving the frankest analysis of the strike of three thousand workers against the Mexican Light and Power Company. *La Prensa*'s "frankness" consists in attacking President Cardenas for not halting the strike. The Times correspondent forgot to add that *La Prensa* speaks for the clerical-feudal reaction in Mexico. It has a long and dishonorable record as an agitator against progress and socialist education and aids the advocates of U.S. intervention.

The strike has been sustained as "legal" by the federal authorities. There is even talk of the government impounding the British-controlled company if it refuses to settle, and turning the plant over to the workers. While no United States capital is involved in this case, it seems that The Times does not like this idea. We find it rather appealing.

Paying Landon's Way

IF YOU still doubt that the Republican Party works hand in glove with Wall Street and the Liberty League, consider the list of campaign contributions made public by the Republican National Committee. In the first two months of 1936,

three Morgan men donated a total of \$15,000 to the Hearst-Landon war chest. They were Junius Morgan, son of America's No. 1 banker; H. P. Davison, partner in the Morgan firm; and George F. Baker of the First National Bank, a Morgan outfit.

The du Ponts contributed \$5,000; so did Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., head of General Motors. Other donors were W. L. Mellon of Gulf Oil; Lester Armour of Armour Meat Products; Earl F. Reed of Weirton Steel, notorious anti-labor company; Harold S. Vanderbilt, director of thirty railway companies, and H. E. Mansville of the Johns-Mansville Company. None of these gave less than \$2,000 each.

Spain Defends Democracy

FACED with a democratic shakeup in the army, fascist and monarchist officers stationed in Morocco have launched an attempt to destroy the Spanish Republic. The long-drawn-out Rightist campaign of civil disturbance and economic sabotage has thus culminated in a counter-revolutionary putsch. In defiance of the people's will, Gil Robles and General Franco have set out to erect a military dictatorship. They seek not only to substitute fascist violence for existing civil rights, but to plunge the country back socially into the feudal-clerical abyss of the past. For months the fascists have protested their peaceful intent; they have poured out venomous accusations of violence and dictatorship against the partisans of the People's Bloc. Now Gil Robles and his fascist plotters have at last come out into the open, giving the world another object lesson in fascist integrity.

It is significant that the reaction has been obliged to base its hopes on the Moroccan troops, a body of men remote geographically, as well as every other way, from the mass of the Spanish people. Speculating upon the allegiance of these mercenary forces, and upon possible wavering among the more conservative supporters of the Republican government, the fascists apparently envisaged a march on Madrid in the manner of the bloodcurdling assault of General Doval's "Tercios" upon the revolutionary miners' battal-

ions in Asturias during October, 1934.

But the reaction appears to have badly overplayed its hand. Its efforts to drive a wedge in the People's Front by intimidating middle-class Republicans, have so far proven of little avail. For, once confronted with the fascist bid for power, middle-class Republicans and labor have closed ranks as never before, in defense of democracy. Revolutionary workers and simple upholders of Republican order have formed united combat squads. The People's Front, arming the populace for anti-fascist defense, drawing together in fighting formation the forward-looking elements of the entire people, is prov-

ing under duress to be the only effective barrier to fascism.

Nor has the reaction counted on the unity and revolutionary consciousness of a proletariat which came to know the lash of fascist inquisition in October, 1934. The fascist attempt has evoked a mobile and united army of Socialist, Communist and Syndicalist workers, many hundred thousand strong, a living barricade to the reaction, ready to emulate the miners of Asturias. Within the army itself the support which the fascists apparently expected on the mainland has, at this writing, not materialized to any significant extent. It would thus seem that the anti-fascist mood of the people has prevailed among the soldier mass as against the intrigues of the officer caste.

If the Republican government is victorious, as now seems probable, a more rapid pace in the application of the People's Bloc program may be expected of it, particularly in respect to disarming and incapacitating the reaction and forcing employers to comply with social legislation. A sharper leftward trend may be expected as a result of the greater unity and influence which the working class is now acquiring.

How stirringly the United Front goes forward in defense of the people against the trickery and terror of the fascist reaction, teaching the great lesson of our time: that the workers and their middle-class allies can by united action reap a bright future in a decaying world.



Helios Gomez

Wolves in the Fold

BACK in the quiet of their own homes, the 14,000 men and women who attended the Townsend convention in Cleveland last week can take stock. They have much to think about. Their first reaction, it seems to us, should be one of thankfulness that their cause has not been delivered over, lock, stock, and barrel, to Lemke and the Liberty League. But their relief should be tempered by anxiety, for the menace has not been removed. An unscrupulous priest and a loud-mouthed fascist adventurer came close to robbing them of everything for which they have been striving.

The Townsendites are not a political party. They are American men and women seeking security for the years when they can no longer work. Let them not be diverted from that goal by charlatans and demagogues who would use their numerical strength to build up a movement of the blackest

reaction—in which there will be security neither for the old nor the young. Coughlin, without a glimmer of sympathy for the aim of the Townsendites, once branded their plan as “economic insanity.” The antics of Coughlin and Gerald Smith at Cleveland were no more than an audacious attempt to make the Townsendites forget pensions and throw their support to Lemke and his reactionary Union Party. Support of Lemke is support of Landon. And if there is one sure way of knifing old-age pensions and social security of any kind, it is to send to the White House Alf M. Landon, the man who thinks \$1.08 per week is enough for a family on relief.

The Townsendites are to be congratulated for refusing to surrender themselves to reaction. Dr. Townsend himself wavered badly. He permitted the sly G. L. K. Smith to change the name of his group from Old Age Re-

volving Pensions to the Townsend Recovery Plan, thus shifting the emphasis of the group's purpose. He fought every move to make the Townsendites a democratic movement. And finally, despite the convention keynote: “We are not going to lose with Lemke! We are going to triumph with Townsend!” the Doctor himself agreed to take the stump for Lemke.

What Townsend does concerning the Union Party is his affair. It should not be the affair of the Townsend rank and file. Let them recall that their convention refused to endorse Lemke. And let them read the forthright commitments for old-age pensions in the platform of the Communist Party and in the program of the Farmer-Labor candidates throughout the country. That is the way to deal with the wolves in sheep's clothing who came to Cleveland to kill Townsend and then feast on his following.

Whither Townsendism?

CELESTE STRACK

CLEVELAND.

SITTING among the elderly delegates of the Townsend convention here in Cleveland, I have been watching the white-haired California school-teacher who formally heads the movement, and the plump Father Coughlin and the energetic Gerald K. Smith, Huey Long's political son and heir. And it has begun to dawn on me that this convention has implications beyond the present election campaign. The Detroit priest and the Louisiana Bible-thumpers have made it abundantly clear that their connection with the Townsend movement is no mere political flirtation. It is rather a marriage designed to produce a bouncing nine-pound fascist movement in America. The alliance of the Townsendites, the Coughlinites, and the Smith forces around Lemke is a step toward the election of Landon; the election of Landon would be a step toward fascism. Any doubts I may have had on this score were dissipated by the Reverend Gerald K. Smith himself. This burly disciple of Huey Long towers over the frail Dr. Townsend; he dominates the convention platform in Cleveland's Public Auditorium; he dominates the publicity; he hopes to dominate the Townsend

old-age revolving pension movement.

The Reverend Gerald K. Smith spent a great deal of time with the reporters at the press table. I called him outside into a little alcove behind the platform and interviewed him for THE NEW MASSES. The Reverend Doctor bubbled over with energy. He was jumpy but talkative.

“The convention,” I began, “has voted against endorsing any political party. But aren't you and Dr. Townsend trying to put the Townsend movement behind the Union Party?”

“Dr. Townsend and I will do everything we can as leaders to back Lemke,” Dr. Smith replied.

“As leaders? You mean you will endorse Lemke not as individuals but as the leaders of a movement?”

“Yes, as leaders of a movement.” He emphasized each word.

“Doesn't that mean that your resolution not to endorse any political party was only a blind?”

The Reverend Gerald K. Smith shrugged his shoulders.

“There has been a lot of talk at this con-

vention,” I said, “about great men, specifically about yourself, Dr. Townsend, and Father Coughlin. Isn't your idea of leadership like the conception of the Führer?”

“I never discuss American events in European terms.”

“How would you describe your idea of leadership?”

“It's a new kind of leadership. A man arises and says ‘follow me,’ and if the people follow, that's how we know him as a leader.”

“Do you mean that the democratic method of choosing leaders isn't worth while?”

“It's a lot of baloney,” Dr. Smith said sharply. “It doesn't really mean anything. We can tell what they're thinking without taking a vote.”

I wanted to ask Dr. Smith about his reported connections with Hearst. Before I had uttered two words, he was pouring out his answer.

“I never saw Hearst, never met Hearst, never talked to him. It's all a lie.” The Reverend Doctor smiled sweetly.

“Many people in this convention,” I said, “consider Hearst democracy's greatest menace today. You say you want to maintain

democracy. Do you agree with your delegates' opinion of Hearst?"

"I agree with Hearst in his attack on President Roosevelt."

"That wasn't what I asked. I asked whether you think Hearst is democracy's greatest enemy today."

"No," the Reverend Gerald K. Smith said flatly. "President Roosevelt is."

"Do you believe it is more important to defeat Roosevelt than to pass the old-age pension law?"

"Yes."

"Your own state of Louisiana is not controlled by President Roosevelt. Your own people control it. Why haven't you put the Townsend Plan into effect in Louisiana?"

"The individual states," he began glibly, "haven't the power or the ability to put it into effect." Then he stopped and started a new speech. "That is to say, I mean, uh, we did put a law into effect just the last session of the legislature."

"What law?"

"The social-security law."

"Isn't that President Roosevelt's bill?"

"Yes."

"But you said you are opposed to President Roosevelt and his bill."

"Yes."

"Then why haven't you put the Townsend Plan into effect in Louisiana?"

"Because the transaction tax is impractical in a single state."

"Aren't there other methods of raising money, such as taxing corporations and wealthy individuals?"

"Yes."

"Then why haven't you used them to pay for an old-age pension in your own state?"

For the first time in the interview, the Reverend Gerald K. Smith showed confusion and hesitation. He mumbled something about being too busy nationally to attend to state affairs. He seemed anxious to get back to the platform, but I stopped him by asking about the proposed Townsend youth movement.

"That's a swell thing," he said. "I have a lot of ideas on that. I want to get twelve young men in every community to mobilize around themselves the Townsend Recovery Youth. They would be picked young men, a special group."

"How would you select them?"

"On the basis of physical fitness, sacrificial aims, and alertness. The basic criterion would be loyalty to our present system of government."

"Are there any young people you would exclude?"

"Some groups, yes. Communists and Socialists, for example. We can't compromise an inch with them."

"Suppose young radicals would be willing to work for the Townsend movement's aims?"

"That doesn't matter. They want to overthrow our government."

"What would be the duties of the twelve picked young men?"

"They would organize other young people, guard the ballot boxes, see that the ballots are honestly counted, protect the community from any encroachments on its democratic rights."

"What do you mean by protecting the community from any encroachments on its democratic rights?"

"The young men would break up Communist meetings, for instance."

"Do you mean by Communists people who disagree with your idea of government?"

"People who want to overthrow it."

"Who would judge the character of these meetings which are to be broken up?"

"The young men would."

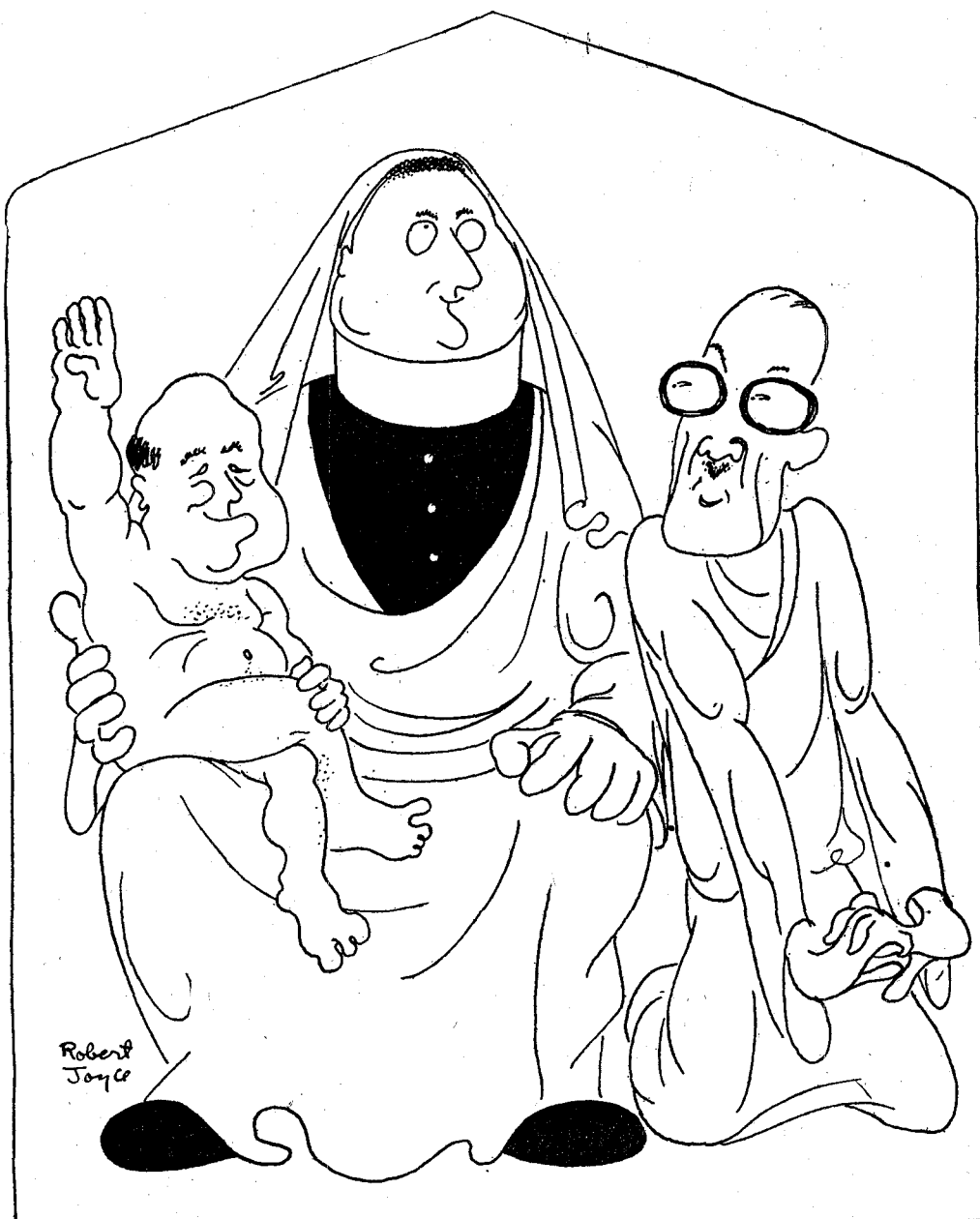
The picture which the Reverend Doctor Gerald K. Smith drew was clear enough: a fascist youth movement to divert young people from any progressive youth program. This is part of the conspiracy at this conven-

tion where Dr. Smith and Father Coughlin have been trying to divert the older people from their pension program.

I asked Dr. Smith his opinion of the present struggle for the organization of industrial trade unions. He told me he favored William Green's group. He was against John L. Lewis and the vertical unions, saying they want to take over business.

OLD-AGE pensions and the need of economic security brought simple folk from America's towns and farms to the Cleveland convention to work with their leader, silver-haired Dr. Townsend. Instead, they found waiting for them an alliance of the Huey Long machine and the Lemke-Coughlin Union Party intent upon defeating Roosevelt in November.

The Republican-Hearst-Liberty League crowd must have enjoyed the convention hugely. Dr. Townsend's own first address opened with a broadside against Roosevelt, whose administration Townsend called "a deliberate, Machiavellian attempt to discredit



"Father, did you teach the little rascal that salute?"

Robert Joyce

and totally wreck the American principle of government." Defense of the Supreme Court and a Republican denunciation of the growing tax burden followed. The opening wedge for such an attack had been furnished by Roosevelt himself in his toleration of the shameful Congressional inquisition of Townsend and its attempts to discredit the movement for old-age pensions. But the natural resentment of the delegates against this action and their dissatisfaction with the administration's "social security" was cleverly fanned into a burning fire against Roosevelt and his reelection measure.

Stocky, energetic, smooth-voiced Gerald K. Smith followed Dr. Townsend with a roof-raising speech in which he directed not only the reactions of the delegates but even ordered them when to applaud. Gerald Smith developed more openly the line of the Liberty League, ending his bitter attack on Roosevelt with the words: "It is Tammany or Independence Hall. It is the Russian Primer or the Holy Bible. It is the Red Flag or the Stars and Stripes. It is Lenin or Lincoln, Stalin or Jefferson, James A. Farley or Francis E. Townsend."

The statement of Townsend and Smith that they considered the defeat of Roosevelt more important than the passage of the Townsend Plan was confirmed by their actions; their position was calculated to throw the delegates back into the arms of the Republicans directly. But since most delegates were distinctly anti-Republican, they were asked to support the Republican machine indirectly through the Coughlin-Lemke Union Party.

Early in the convention bitter opposition to Gerald Smith and his plans developed. Its first open expression was the keynote speech by Martin F. Smith of Washington, a Democrat, who voiced the position of those Democrats in the national Townsend leadership, as well as the discontent of the Democratic delegates to the convention, centering around a bloc from the "solid South," but scattered through all the state delegations. "My friends, we are not going to lose with Lemke, we are going to triumph with Townsend," he said. By the end of the first day, some fifteen state delegations had caucused against any endorsement of Lemke. Their position was in general opposition to any "third party" endorsement.

A second, less vocal, source of opposition were the delegates sympathetic to independent political action through some group such as a Farmer-Labor party. I found this sentiment in talking with delegates from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas. As one delegate put it: "We Townsendites are beginning to understand that independent political action is necessary; but if we ever hook up with a 'third party' it should be a democratically run affair of the people—not this fake people's party of Coughlin." During the convention there was no expression from the platform of this point of view. These delegates worked

with the first group for no endorsement of a political party or presidential candidate at this time.

By Wednesday night, Gerald Smith and his satellites were upset. Their plans were not proceeding smoothly. They produced from their sleeves the joker they had been quietly holding: Father Coughlin rushed from Detroit to speak to the convention. The newspapers carried his speech. It was clever. It threw many of the delegates into political orgasms. It was pure vitriol against Roosevelt. It took a delicate "sympathetic" poke at Landon, and it didn't endorse the Townsend plan. It set forth the political strategy by which the Union Party could be endorsed, yet not endorsed.

It placed the holy trinity, the Rev. G. K. Smith, Dr. Townsend, and Father Coughlin, up against the "unholy trinity" of Roosevelt, Landon, and Browder. These "three gr-e-a-t leaders," would themselves endorse the Union Party, keeping their organizations distinct, non-partisan, non-political. "And where your leader Dr. Townsend goes, will you not follow?"

Delegates jumped to their feet, hysterically cheered. But a few walked out of the hall angrily; whole state delegations remained seated, muttering among themselves. As a result of the resentment the Socialist, Democratic and Republican presidential candidates were invited to speak.

The next day the famous "fight of the Smiths" took place, in which Gomer Smith accused Gerald Smith of being a tool of Hearst, a man who tried to sell out the Townsend movement to the Liberty League. Gomer Smith coupled his attack with insistence on non-endorsement of a party, and with a personal tribute to President Roosevelt.

By Saturday this fight was patched up in the usual dramatic, artistically staged manner. Gomer Smith and the Democratic leaders were somewhat pacified by a resolution in which it was stated that the Townsend organization would neither directly nor indirectly support any presidential candidate, but would concentrate on election of individual candidates. Townsend and Gerald Smith would, as "leaders," work for Lemke. But it was clear that this was a "compromise" in which the lion lay down with the lamb, with the lamb inside the lion. Yet the fact remains that despite all the stage-settings, fine speeches, hot air, and nauseating political gas—this was a concession and a huge number of delegates will not follow their leader to Lemke or Landon. I even heard many delegates speak of local alliances with progressive independent political groups or local farmer-labor parties.

And by Monday Gomer Smith was kicking over the traces again.

NORMAN THOMAS, who spoke on Saturday, had a splendid opportunity to discuss the presidential elections and the future of the Townsend movement. The delegates were genuinely anxious to hear

him. He won the sympathy of many delegates by saying he agreed with their objectives, and by attacking the tyranny of the Supreme Court. But he made no analysis of the major problems confronting the convention. He did not tell how to secure old-age pensions and security through cooperation with other progressive groups. He did not expose the role of the Coughlin-Lemke Party as an aid to Landon, as a barrier to old-age pensions. Norman Thomas missed a great opportunity to direct the sentiments of the Townsendites into concrete progressive channels. His defiant approach, his failure to grasp the issues which engrossed the delegates, tended to turn many of them away from the progressive political groups.

The several hundred young people present at the Townsend convention, and their leaders who spoke and conducted several youth sessions, are not, in the main, favorable to Gerald Smith and his plans. They were the only group who successfully passed resolutions by pressure from the floor. On Saturday they became angry because their demands for youth representation and a youth department had not been met by the Resolutions committee. A committee marched to the platform, and insisted that two resolutions be presented and passed. One provided a youth representative on all congressional-district, state, and national boards. The other called upon the Board of Directors to consider sending a representative to the World Youth Congress in Geneva this August. In the youth meetings the American Youth Congress presented greetings and was favorably received. A youth advisory committee to insist on the fulfillment of the youth resolutions was elected, one of whose members is on the national council of the American Youth Congress. Townsend youth are progressive; they want democracy; they do not want Gerald K. Smith.

What of the mass of delegates themselves? That they were influenced by Coughlin, by Smith, by the skillful manipulation of emotion and religious fervor cannot be denied. But there are many who are determined to stop the machinations of Smith and Coughlin. These "plain people" of America, from the farms and the towns, are more shrewd than the Gerald Smiths and Father Coughlins realize. These leaders—and I heard them in their conference rooms—despise the people they lead. There they make a mistake. In the next months there will be discussions, and criticism, and hard-headed thinking done in the Townsend movement. There will be insistence on strengthening the movement for pensions, the movement to meet the problems of youth. In my opinion the Townsendites are not yet ready to abandon their movement to fascist forces. If they want to secure their pensions and security they must work with labor, with the progressive groups in American life; they must themselves control their organization. The Townsendites are at the crossroads.

Steel-Town Politics

MARGUERITE YOUNG

HOMESTEAD, Pennsylvania.

AS THE natives reckon distance it is just three red lights, along Eighth Avenue from the home of Burgess John Cavanaugh of Homestead to that of Burgess Richard Lawry of West Homestead. Hay Street, cutting briefly across the narrow valley from hills burdened with miserable clapboard dwellings to the Monongahela's mill-edged bank, divides the boroughs. Across the river rise the Rankin stacks and the long black bulk of the Edgar Thompson works at Braddock. Three miles away, on this side, the Duquesne rolling mills; another half dozen miles on or so, mammoth Clairton, turning coke into gas and a hundred other by-products, as well as converting iron. This is the heart of the kingdom of United States Steel.

I first heard of Cavanaugh as the "other" company burgess. He was *not* the one who in 1919 uttered the classic, "Jesus Christ himself could not speak here for the A.F. of L." That was Jim Crawford, who still presides in Duquesne, next door to his brother's rich McKeesport Tin Plate Company. No, Cavanaugh was the "other" one. The one who drove Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to Federal property to speak with militant steel workers. The one who heads a local Republican machine which old men say thought nothing of stationing men at the polls with billies to clout across the teeth any voter protesting against having his ballot taken away and marked for him. In the last, the upset election, some Democratic councilmen were victorious. Buttressed by their own machine headed by Boss McLean, they yet were unwilling to take over in Cavanaugh's municipal building without the protection of armed state police.

Lawry walked over to the July 5 meeting in Homestead and stood in the crowd, telling the union organizers, "Okay. If any funny business starts, I'll get in front and we'll march into our bailiwick and I'll close the town and open the meeting in our streets." He is used to being on the wrong end of arrest himself, though he is squire as well as burgess. Last month police nabbed him in Pittsburgh. He was speaking from a rooftop equipped with loud speakers, to encourage workers organizing in an Andrew Mellon plant across the street. Speaking without a permit, the police said. Last year Allegheny County deputies took him into custody. The A. & P. drivers were striking; scabs were rolling through West Homestead with deputies hanging on the running boards. Lawry would go out and arrest them for traffic violations. Suddenly a squad car pulled up at his Borough Hall, fifteen armed deputies piled out and arrested the Burgess! "Where's

your warrant?" he yelled. "We don't need none," one flung back, elbowing him to the sheriff. Now Lawry is suing the sheriff for false arrest. Lawry was elected on a Square Deal ticket, and five out of seven Square Deal councilmen with him. But every year he calls the organization into a hall to face a platform dotted with empty, black-draped chairs, one for each sell-out to the mills. To each empty black chair Lawry addresses a speech on the imaginary occupant's record of betrayal. This year Lawry was followed by visiting speakers advocating a Farmer-Labor Party.

You could hear raised voices, one going a mile a minute sharply above the rest, before you reached the screen door of Lawry's one-story frame office-home fronted by dusty plate-glass windows. It turned out to be only a friendly argument between the burgess of West Homestead and some of his cronies from Homestead.

"I'LL ask you now, is it true or ain't it that there's vice, there's organized graft in Homestead, and Cavanaugh has his finger in it?" Burgess Lawry shouted. A hard-muscled man of forty-five with a round pink face and blazing blue eyes, he stood in his shirt sleeves, a streaked panama hat on the back of his head. He pounded the big oak desk that spread across half the room. It was a hot, dusty, confused room giving on a hall that divided the living quarters in back. Opposite the desk an old miner sat in a rocker, silently wagging his head. In the back door stood the burgess's wife. Periodically opening his mouth, but unable to get in a word, a reporter from a Pittsburgh paper sat on the desk, waiting. The object of the burgess's question was Homestead's Salvation Army captain, sweating in the front doorway.

"Tell me," repeated the burgess. "Is it true, or ain't it?"

"Listen," pleaded the Salvation Army, "I live in Homestead!"

"Heh," triumphed the burgess, "there's the answer."

"Well," the captain squinted through his spectacles, shoving his cap around his head, piqued, "who you gonna put in his place? Is the Democrats any better?"

"No," roared Lawry, "I said that before. I said McLean and his Democrats is just as bad. I said it's like there's two men in a bed and one is learning from the other until pretty soon he knows enough to get up and kick his teacher out. But you look at West Homestead. Is there any organized vice, any numbers racket, any organized crap games and bookmakers? I'll ask you, now."

"That's right," said the captain. "There ain't."

I asked the captain what he thought about the steel-union drive. He surveyed me quizzically and said, "That's up to the men. If they want to strike——"

"Who said strike?" the burgess broke in. "We're asking you about *organizing*."

"Oh," the captain hemmed, inching toward the door, "if they want to organize——"

"Will you help them, captain, will you speak at their meetings?"

Lawry roared and rocked with laughter. "Don't you know," he snorted, "ain't it true, captain, the Salvation Army don't function in Homestead unless Cavanaugh heads its drive and the mills put their okay on it?"

The captain just stood there swinging his basket. Relief flashed into his face as the reporter finally got his question in. What about the burgess's row, with his own chief of police, over the funds from the police picnic? The chief said he wanted to give the funds to the girls' free day camp.

"He's a God-damned dirty rotten stinking sonofabitch and liar," the burgess pronounced, his voice rising. "I said we'd give the money for the girls. He wants to give it to the Boy Scouts, without any accounting. And I'll tell you now I'm opposed to them. They put wooden guns into the boys' hands—for what? When I was a kid, I come home with one, one day, and my father broke it across my backside. He said, 'What! Learning to use a gun to go out in strikes and shoot your own father and brothers!' I say they'll give the money to the girls' camp, and give me an accounting by Tuesday, or I'll suspend the whole police force."

AN OLD man shuffled in and stood beside the man in the rocker. His broad shoulders were encased in a spotless white shirt. He nodded around the office and asked the miner, "How was the meeting?" They told him about the thousands who turned out and the speakers' starting the national drive with confidence, and they asked him why he wasn't there.

"I struck in '92," he said softly, "and two years they punished me. I'm seventy-two now. Forty-two dollars a month ain't much of a pension after thirty-seven years in the mills, but it's all I got. Just the same, I know what I think. But I'm like a man with his head in the mouth of a dog. They talk about free speech around here. Well, maybe so, but when you ain't got one dollar to stick to another—say, how many was there?"

The burgess, fixing upon the old man a moment, turned back to the Salvation Army, hurling out, "Why don't you go out and preach a real religion, and teach the working class the brotherhood of man? One that'll

show us how to get the wealth we produce?"

"The trouble at Homestead," said the captain, "the trouble over the whole world is one little word—sin."

"Sin!" The burgess howled. "Look at him"—gesturing toward the pensioner. "Look out there"—gesturing toward the back of the house. Behind it on the river bank is rising another United States Steel unit. Fifteen to twenty million dollars it is costing, a slight item paid for out of the product of its workmen. One man at the new machines, in the new continuous rolling mill, will do the work of a dozen or more. They say the Steel and Iron Institute companies have \$250,000,000 invested in this and others now building.

"Sin!" exclaimed the burgess. "Is it a sin or ain't it for the company to steal what its men produce?"

"It's selfishness," wheedled the captain.

"That ain't no answer. Is it a sin or ain't it?"

"Well, yes," the captain surrendered, "I reckon it is."

"Damn right," the burgess said; "and one thing I'll tell you: *this* time we're going to organize."

That seemed to settle matters. One by one they drifted out. I asked the burgess, then, how he keeps his job. He grunted, "Fightin' fire with fire." And it's a racket—only he works it for the people instead of the company, he amiably explained. His constituents in the West End are mainly Negro and foreign-born steel workers. He organized them into the Independent Voters League and they put a variety of candidates in the field to split the nationalist vote for the company's stooges. He makes alliances with Democrats, Socialists, anyone who will join them. He maintains as best he can, and dramatizes, constitutional rights, particularly secrecy of the ballot, freedom of speech. Once when his own police threatened to break up an outdoor mass meeting of the unemployed assembled by the one or two Communists who ever visit the borough, Lawry took a soap box and personally opened the meeting. He has one unique asset—that terrible, irreverent tongue powered by inexhaustible energy.

"At that," he asked, "what can I accomplish? Clean up the rackets, provide free garbage collection, build a playground, improve the fire system, and cut the local taxes. But anything fundamental? Hell, after we elect 'em, the mills pick 'em off one by one." He squinted, leaned back and crossed his arms on his chest. "That's why I do the heavy work around here for a Farmer-Labor Party."

SINCE the Lawrys came from England, three generations have toiled in the mines and mills around Homestead. Dick Lawry's father, James, at six years of age, went down to help his father and his twelve brothers and sisters dig coal—for that the head of the family was paid for an extra car each day. James Lawry was secretary of the

union at Homestead when they struck in '89 and won their first sliding wage scale. In those days Charlie Schwab was Carnegie's superintendent. Once Lawry took the union committee to the management to complain against flimflamming; the men were being cheated on their tonnage and Lawry had the figures to prove it.

"Where did you get them?" asked Schwab.

"If you must know, off the recorder's slate," replied Lawry.

"You're a thief!" cried Schwab. Lawry answered coolly, "You're a liar." Schwab's eyes danced in his head, but he let it pass. Some weeks later the foreman found a pretext to fire Lawry. The union held a mass-meeting, sent another committee to Schwab. He huffed and puffed and offered many tricky compromises, but in the end Lawry went back to his job.

That was in the time of the union's top strength—the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had 24,000 members and Homestead was its citadel. Soon Carnegie brought in H. C. Frick and together they schemed to put the workmen down by force. Their ukase against the workers' organization was answered by the strike of '92. Then came the invasion by the Pinkertons on the barges, the day-long battle on the Monongahela's banks, and the Pinkertons' surrender. Then the six days' calm, ended by the arrival of 8000 militiamen who finally beat the men back into the mills to usher in the era of open shop.

James Lawry was not there to witness the defeat. Enfeebled by miner's asthma, he was offered a job as timekeeper in a nearby quarry, and took it. He and his brother Thomas met a man who translated what they knew about poverty and toil, riches without work, into a kind of creed. The stranger was Daniel De Leon. So Dick Lawry learned about the brotherhood of man. He went into the mills at eleven. He was caught singing his Uncle Thomas's songs about the Socialist-Labor Party at his bench, and told to shut up, quit, or get fired. He quit. He went into the Socialist-Labor Party, later left it and entered into local politics as a candidate on Democratic and sometimes Republican tickets. He has been squire or councilman continuously for eighteen years. He became a little business man, had a couple of small factories. The crash wiped him out in 1930. He cut loose as an independent, forming his own Independent Voters League.

John Cavanaugh also worked in Homestead before the strike of '92, but he never returned to the mills. He went instead to the local police force, and rose quickly toward constable. Then he opened his own private detective agency. People who lived here say his wife operated the boarding house for deputized scab protectors during the strike at the Mesta Machine shop in 1907—a famous strike, because it saw the first use of the state constabulary, created by an act sponsored by a legislator who was also a brother of the owner of the Mesta shop.

Later Cavanaugh became a county detective, then deputy coroner, and at last, with the blessing of the Pennsylvania State Association of Manufacturers and Grundy and L. A. Burnett, vice-president and chief of spies for Carnegie-Illinois, and a burgess.

Now he inhabits a great brick house darkly dominating the whole neighborhood. It was Mrs. Cavanaugh who insisted that he see me—the journalist from New York. She disappeared when he sat down, a pot-bellied man with the flatfoot's wary, penetrating glance and the pliant low voice that purrs and snarls with equal facility. A remarkably well preserved and well dressed Irishman, a diamond on his smooth hand.

"The steel union?" he repeated. "Why, I hadn't give it any thought." He gave me another once-over and added, "Of course, we appear to have a very well satisfied neighborhood. We've been having our own union and the men appear to be well satisfied. I don't know any reason for having another. I can't see any sense to it."

"You mean they have the company union?"

"Ye-ah," he drawled.

"I've heard, Burgess, they're in that company union because they lacked the political and economic freedom to form their own."

"That's just damned lies," he fired. "They've had meetings around here. I know Mrs. Pinchot made a remark, but it's the most damnable lie."

I told him I hadn't heard of that; I was thinking of Secretary Perkins's reports concerning her experience with the "nervous burgess" of Homestead. He became deeply interested and invited me into his sitting room. It was chock-full of plush and brass and marble. Blue plush chairs and hangings, the walls brocaded in blue and gold, great cloisonné vases on the marble mantle above an enormous brass chest.

Who said Miss Perkins had to go to Federal property? Why, Miss Perkins herself.

"That dirty old rip!" rasped the burgess. "I'll show you something."

First, though, would he tell me about his private detective agency? He got up and walked around the room. *Who* told that? People who lived here? *What* people? *Who*?

"Well," he countered finally, "suppose I did start one. What about it?"

I just wanted to know, thanks. Also, about running the boarding house for the scab protectors during the Mesta Machine strike.

"Listen," the burgess changed the subject. "I was in the mill in 1892, and the union sold us out body, soul, and britches."

"But about the boarding house, burgess. Was it located in the Keitzer building at Eighth Avenue and Hay Street?"

"You come with me!"

And he led through the house, out of a back entrance, and around the corner. He knocked on a door. A man came out. Now this was Roy Keitzer, the son of the owner of the Keitzer building. *Did* the burgess use the building to feed strike-breakers?

"Oh, no," said Keitzer. He hesitated

adding, "Of course, if somebody rented the hotel, he could rent rooms to whomever he wanted—it was no concern of ours. Of course I was only a small boy—say, where is this stuff coming from, *who* has been telling this stuff around here!"

The burgess led on to the municipal building. On the way I asked him whether he believed in free speech.

"Certainly—but not for these Red hounds, or I ought to say Red sonsofbitches, overthrowing the government. That's been the trouble with the labor movement—Reds getting in and crucifying it." Suddenly he turned and scrutinized me again, saying, half teasingly, "Of course for all I know you might be one of them yourself—and if you are, you know what I think of you." He wasn't quite sure, however. He was still talking smoothly, ingratiatingly. He was still sore at Secretary Perkins. He went to a safe in his office and pulled out a sheet of paper and laid it out on his desk, grinning with satisfaction. "There! I thought I'd just keep this, I thought she'd stop that story; but since she hasn't, well, just look this over!"

Sure enough, it was a letter signed by Miss Perkins, thanking the nervous burgess: "Permit me to express to you my appreciation for your assistance in placing at my disposal last Friday the facilities of the Municip-

pal Building at Homestead. Very truly yours . . ."

"Of course," the Burgess said, "there was a Communist group there at the time. I told the mill to keep them out. I told Miss Perkins why—they were the same people that came around making trouble in 1919. They demanded to speak to her and she asked was there a park where she could. I told her, 'No, not with Reds,' and that's why she went to the Post Office."

I asked him what he'd do if a Red turned up in Homestead now. He pursed his lips belligerently. "I ain't saying who I'd tolerate—I ain't crossing any bridges till I come to them."

That seemed to me a slight violation of the Constitution, but he assured me solemnly, "Oh, no!" Free speech didn't go *that* far! So I asked him what he meant by Reds, who were the Reds?

"Why," he sat up abruptly, "they're all in *The Red Network*. Didn't you read Mrs. Dilling's book?"

It was too tempting an opportunity to test the bite behind the bark. I told him Mrs. Dilling did me the honor of including me in her rostrum. And the jaw dropped and jutted, and the lips pursed, and he did nothing at all, just sat there smiling.

I asked him about the numbers racket—was it flourishing?

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, "that's going on. It's impossible to break it up. I bet you play the numbers yourself!"

And organized vice, too, was flourishing? "Now," the burgess purred, "you've got to remember we've got plenty of Negroes here, and all kinds of foreigners. Considering everything, I'd say we got no more than any other industrial community with that kind of population."

"Would you say there's no more than down the street, in West Homestead?"

"Listen, West Homestead's a town of 3500. We've got 21,000. You can't compare 'em."

Which left but the main question—would Burgess Cavanaugh respect and enforce civil rights in the steel workers' drive and in case of a strike?

"Just like they've always been respected, as far back as 1892," he said.

1892! When first the Pinkertons and then the militia trampled liberty notoriously! He meant to enforce them according to a concept that recognized no invasion of them in 1892?

"Naw, no invasion there." He considered a moment. "The Pinkertons, maybe—but there's no question but that the use of the militia was right. You don't know the conditions that existed. Why, till the militia arrived, God help a scab!"

Odets's First Film

SIDNEY KAUFMAN

The following account is based upon the shooting script of Clifford Odets's first film. A shooting script is the skeleton of the picture from which the director works. Changes from this script are not probable, but cuts have been known to occur.—The Editors.

THE shooting script of *The General Died at Dawn*, which Paramount will release in about a month, is a war-horse of a China thriller with panoply and dialogue by Clifford Odets. It is another in the new Hollywood tradition of pictures with fabulous and neatly articulated plots overlaid with glancing touches of fresh speech and characterization deceptively real. Just as a single speech electrified *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and transformed Clarence Kelland's slick glycerine into what momentarily resembled TNT, so this melodramatic yarn rings like a coin from the nickelodeon mint—but, godalmighty, what a different face it wears.

Odets took to celluloid with apparent glee. The picture in six sequences and a prologue luxuriates in all the technical devices that exceed the limitations of the stage. Fadeouts are used only between sequences as a sort of curtain so that each sequence is close-knit in continuity. The soppy use of fadeouts is re-

sponsible for the gag and anti-climax of Hollywood quickies, the fadeout serving as evasion. The elimination of fadeouts disciplines and integrates the production. Odets reveals himself also as visual rhymist in his transitions. Transitions between shots are a challenge to the writer and director. They must bridge a gap in time or space or idea without loss of the sense of progression, frequently even explaining or defining the nature of the transition. It is precisely here that the language of the film should be at its richest, the symbolizations most intense: instead, falling calendar leaves, spinning clock hands, "Came the dawns," and fingers traced across maps are the hackneyed skeletons of Hollywood. So that these visual rhymes of Odets's are a delight. A turning doorknob is suddenly struck by another—we find ourselves in the midst of the next scene around a billiard table. Someone is holding a Chinese fan decorated with a hotel advertisement—we break through the fan and recognize the hotel owner whose face was in the ad.

Perhaps, because their expression is so naïve, Odets is fascinated by advertisements and popular songs. General Yang, the warlord who when he plundered left only the bark on the trees, uses Sweetums, a breath purifier that promises an angel's breath.

Perry, trying to run off with stolen money and growing more jittery each minute, finds himself under the menacing ax in a travel poster of Chinese ritual dances. Judy Perry refers to herself in the phrase of an old ragtime melody, "I'm nothing but a nothing." Bright, a drunken mercenary gun-runner, is constantly singing, "I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you."

Gary Cooper plays O'Hara, an American airman who was brought out to drop bombs on the people he later decided to serve. After playing Mr. Deeds and uttering some of Odets's speeches, Cooper can probably be counted on to lead a People's Front defense against Light-Horse Victor McLaglen. Here is some dialogue from Sequence B. Madeleine Carroll, whose father is a lackey of Yang's, has decoyed Cooper into a train compartment; she finds herself becoming interested in him:

JUDY: Why do they make these attempts on your life?

O'HARA: Politics! . . . A certain honorable tootsie roll named Yang thinks he has a right to control the lives of tens of thousands of poor Chinese.

JUDY: How?

O'HARA: Military dictatorships! Taxes! You put, he takes! You protest, he

shoots! A head-breaker, a heart-breaker, a strike-breaker! Altogether a four-star rat!

JUDY: And what do the poor ones say?

O'HARA: Me, that's where I come in. They're preparing underground. They need guns, good bullets . . . (points out to row of passing huts). See them? In those huts even the mice go crazy looking for a crumb! Why do you look at me like that?

JUDY: Why do you risk your life, O'Hara? What do you get for it—money, fun?

O'HARA: Here's my life in five lines: Ran away from an orphan asylum at fourteen. Sold papers on the street and got to be pretty good at ducking blows. A life of opposition you'd call it. I boxed for a living . . . you know, bang, bang! Didn't like smacking other kids around, so I quit. Dock walloper for a year; road construction. . . . Then I got with an aviation company. A bunch of us came out here in '29 to fly planes. Well, some of the boys are still flying planes—dropping bombs on the same people I'm working for. You ask me why I'm for oppressed people? Because I got a background of oppression myself, and O'Hara's and elephants don't forget. What's better work for an American than helping fight for democracy? Do you know?

JUDY: No, I don't. But do you believe all that?

O'HARA: That's like asking do I believe I'm alive. I hope to spit I believe it, and I'm plugged with bullet holes to prove it. What's the matter?

JUDY: You make me feel no good. If I believed like that—in anything—I'd do a dance.

[Again, O'Hara is being tortured by Yang:]

YANG: My guards faithful. Stay with the General Yang till each one himself be general and I biggest general of twelve provinces. My guards famous in all China.

O'HARA: Yang, Incorporated! Merchants of War! . . . With twelve dummy partners, huh? Some day even they'll get wise and cut you down like the rice is reaped. Ssst!

YANG: Messer O'Hara got more words than hill has ants.

O'HARA: No wise remarks from you will stop the march of history.

YANG: One great man can make history like me.

O'HARA: In a pig's eye!

YANG: (coldly) I don't like you interfere, Messer O'Hara. Why you help my enemy?

O'HARA: I'd do anything I could to give you a kick in the pants. To my jaundiced eye, you're a social disease. I don't like your disposition—I don't like your friends—I don't like your politics—and I don't like your hat! Maybe your faith-



Production conference: *The General Died at Dawn*. Left to right, Madeleine Carroll, Clifford Odets, Lewis Milestone, John O'Hara, Gary Cooper.

ful dozen here will stick to you, but you're still a small noise at the end of the parade.

YANG: Messer O'Hara seems so little interest in his life.

O'HARA: You take chances, too.

YANG: I have great destiny.

O'HARA: So have I, but mine's tied up with millions of people. Yours is tied up with yourself and the power of machine guns. Your belief is in your own very limited self—mine is in people! One day they'll all walk on earth straight—proud . . . men, not animals, with no fear of hunger and poverty. That's not so bad to die for, tootsie roll.

IT IS the characterizations which Odets managed to construct for the individuals in this story that are responsible for a reversal of the cherished California image of the heathen Chinese. In *The General Died at Dawn*, each of the white characters is corrupt at the outset. When O'Hara and Judy do become decent beings, it is only by direct conflict with the culture that was theirs, by identification with the struggles of the Chinese peasants. The Oriental characters are, on the other hand, universally understandable and rather admirable. The leaders of the peasants are sage and realistic men; no masses of peasants are shown; the troops of Yang are poor, ignorant, misled peasants; Yang and his immediate coterie are repugnant only when they ape the army manner of Europe—Yang's chief assistant is a Prussian; but there is something noble and tragic in the absolute faith that leads them all to a mass suicide in the end.

Train wheels that run to Stravinsky's *Ber-*

ceuse; a dead dog, lips drawn back in a lying beside a dead woman across a path in a village ruined by Yang; vultures planing in the wake of Yang's line of march; Yang's sartorial display; a mandarin "tast life to see if he likes it"—it is sad that these touches outsparkle the main current of story. But as Odets has often observed, only way a mass of individuals can produce a work of art is that they be "an ideologically cemented collective." It was that phrase Vakhtangov's that supplied the key for formation of the Group Theater. Hollywood is too deeply tied in ticker tape to yield mere reason. Only chance allows a production to get by sometimes with the impress of the last man's finger on it. The importance of even these stray chances should not be minimized, however. We rejoice when a single newspaper happens to report a fact accurately. The circulation of a commercially successful film exceeds the total circulation of all the daily papers in the United States and Canada—and in a medium where propaganda effectiveness is a hundredfold enhanced.

It is pleasant to calculate the total significance of a film which brings into nearly a million eyes and ears, closely attentive, the remarks of the struggles of the Chinese peasants: "It is so hard to do right things in the world. We will have to try again. . . . We will find out soon." And Pwe's answer: "We who have been the anvil—will soon come the hammer!" Perhaps the most valuable propaganda in the entire product considered for its ultimate effect on the mind, is Judy's confession in the midst of a traditional kiss-scene: "I'm full of dirty remarks."

Britain at the Crossroads

R. PALME DUTT

B RITISH foreign policy stands today at a major turning-point. The issues of foreign policy dominate all other issues in the political situation. The conflict of opposing lines, not only between the National Government and the popular forces, but between different sections of the ruling class, is more intense than at any time since the war. All the basic issues of policy, of the relation to the League of Nations, of alliances or isolation, of the relation to the fascist Powers, of the whole alignment in world politics, are now being brought up for discussion and settlement. The decisions that are now being taken will have a governing influence on the future of world politics.

The present turning-point, and the wide controversy developing around it, can only be compared in its far-reaching character with that around 1900, at the close of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth century, when the decisions were reached which laid the basis for the war of 1914.

Then the issue was the issue of the transition from the old nineteenth century policy of so-called "isolation," no longer tenable with the weakening position of British imperialism and the growing strength of rival powers, and definite entry into one side of the system of opposing alliances. The decisions then taken, step by step, of alliance, first with Japan, second with France, and third, with czarist Russia, prepared the way for the war of 1914. Today the issue lies between the new system of collective security for the maintenance of peace against all aggression, and the attempt to carry forward the old policies of the balance of power and partial alliances, which in fact means, under present conditions, to play into the hands, and become the tacit ally, of the fascist war offensive. Once again Britain plays the crucial role. On the one side, the fascist Powers, Germany, Japan and Italy, advance openly along the path of war, and seek to draw such smaller states as they can bribe or terrorize into their orbit. On the other side, the front of collective peace is maintained by the Soviet Union, France, the little Entente and the majority of the smaller states. Britain bears a crucial responsibility in cording as it throws its weight in the scales.

The whole issue has been brought to a head at the present stage, first by the German denunciation of Locarno and occupation of the Rhineland, and second, by the collapse of the League of Nations before the Italian aggression against Ethiopia. The collapse of the League of Nations before the Italian aggression was also a defeat of British policy. Britain had endeavored to utilize the League and collective security in its own interests against Italy in the Mediterranean and North Africa, while repudiating the obligations of col-

lective security in Europe against Nazi Germany and maintaining close collaboration with Nazi Germany. This policy of double bookkeeping ended in inevitable failure. The consequent defeat and "humiliation" (in Baldwin's phrase), and the growth of Italian power in the Mediterranean, shook British ruling class opinion as no event since Chanak in 1922, while the open betrayal of the League of Nations by the National Government's taking the lead in ending sanctions aroused a storm of protest from the peace forces and working-class movement. It became clear that the halfway line could no longer be continued: either it would be necessary to enter wholeheartedly along the entire path of collective security, or else it would be necessary in fact to repudiate collective security and to choose an alternative line. The National Government hastened to draw the conclusion that collective security had failed, and now proceeds to the direct attack on the basis of the League of Nations, in the name of its "reform," and to endeavor to reach a general agreement with Nazi Germany, and to build up a common front of England, France, and Germany, replacing the universal obligations of the League of Nations. This policy is, however, only partly cleared, and contains divisions within the ranks of the National Government; one section, representing the open pro-Hitler elements, concentrates on the understanding with Germany and is in general antagonistic to France; another section (as illustrated in the speech of the War Minister, Duff-Cooper, in Paris in June) stresses the necessity of the Anglo-French alliance against the menace of Hitler; similar divisions can be traced in relation to Italy.

THE policy of the National Government arouses widespread and growing opposition from all sections. But this opposition is also extremely confused. One section, within the Conservative ranks, represented by Churchill and Sir Austen Chamberlain, approves the dropping of sanctions against Italy, but calls for a line of general collective security against Nazi aggression in any part of Europe. Another section, represented by Lloyd George, attacks fiercely the betrayal of the League and the "cowardly surrender" to Italy, but at the same time advocates a friendly understanding with Hitler, and proclaims that Britain should not be involved in any conflict on behalf of collective security in Central Europe, as over Austria. Another section, represented by Sir Arthur Salter and Norman Angell, calls for a general line of collective security, against both Italian and German aggression, and the strengthening of the League of Nations. The majority of the

forces of the peace movement see sharply the issue of Fascist Italy, but less clearly the issue of Nazi Germany. Within the labor movement, similar divisions can be traced; alongside the pacifist-isolationist section, which combats all collective security and thereby assists the fascist offensive, open pro-Hitler and anti-Soviet influences combat the general line, represented by the majority, of maintenance of collective peace against all the fascist Powers.

There is thus extreme and dangerous confusion at the present stage, reflecting on the one side the increasing difficulties and dilemmas of British imperialism in its decay, and on the other side the still insufficient clearness of orientation of the working-class movement and of the popular forces supporting peace. The conflict of cross-currents makes valueless any too simple straight-line analysis, even though certain governing trends can be traced. A careful analysis is necessary to distinguish the main trends and forces.

The basic problem of the foreign policy of British imperialism at the present stage can be expressed in the following dilemma. The central fact of the world situation is the war offensive of the fascist Powers. The fascist war offensive directly threatens the British Empire at many points. But at the same time the dominant reactionary trend of British imperialism, its general interest in supporting the counter-revolutionary forces all over the world, as well as the particular interests of its traditional balance-of-power politics, lead it to give a wide measure of support to the fascist Powers, except when an immediate menace to its interests arises, as against the bloc of Powers supporting peace, led by the Soviet Union and France. The situation is further complicated by the wide dispersal of British interests over the world, in the Far East, in the Near and Middle East, in the Mediterranean and in Europe; the difficulty of carrying the Dominions with the foreign policy of Britain; and the ceaseless uncertainties of the basic Anglo-American antagonism. All this leads to a certain weakness and hesitation of policy, and a zigzag character.

On the one hand, the war offensive of the fascist Powers inevitably threatens directly the many-sided interests and possessions of the British Empire. The fascist war offensive is the most direct expression at the present stage of the drive of imperialism to war for the new division of the world. But the principal Power in possession, the principal spoils of any ultimate battle for the new division of the world, is the British Empire. Of this all the fascist Powers are aware.

Japan openly challenges Britain in the Far

East, not only for dominance in China, but throughout eastern Asia, for the possession of Australia and ultimately India. All this finds direct expression in the notorious Tanaka Memorandum, as well as in the utterances of General Araki and the writings of the military party. The recent book, *Japan Must Fight Britain*, by Lieutenant-Commander Tota Ishimaru, has been issued in an English edition, and received wide attention in England.

Italy no less openly challenges Britain in Egypt, Malta, Cyprus, Palestine, and the Near East, as well as its naval domination in the Mediterranean and the route of the Suez Canal to India and the East, the "life-line of the Empire." The British naval expert, Hector Bywater, has reported that although it has not yet been decided to abandon Malta, discussions are already in progress for the development of Capetown as a naval base as the inevitable alternative route for Britain to the East. The Times [London] in an editorial on June 10 gave open expression to British fears:

The situation in the Levant and the Red Sea has been transformed out of all knowledge since last autumn. Egypt, flanked already by the Italian colony of Libya, has anxiously watched the successful aggression that has made Italy mistress of an East African empire marching for hundreds of miles with the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The mineral wealth of her conquest, its capacity for agricultural development, its suitability for European colonization—all these may be exaggerated; but not its military importance as a potential reservoir of "black armies" and as a fortress flanking the sea route to India and the upper waters of the Nile.

Germany at the moment pays court to Britain in order to win its support in establishing its domination in Europe; but its ultimate colonial aims at the expense of the British Empire are unconcealed. Already the issue of the return of the mandated territories to Germany, contemplated by the National Government as a sop to buy off larger claims, has aroused intense opposition in Conservative circles, as the resolution of the National Union of Conservative Associations against any such return has shown. The advance of German rearmament, and especially air armaments (on which Baldwin confessed himself "completely misled"), arouses genuine fear in British military circles. On the naval side admiralty circles are already expressing regret over the Anglo-German naval agreement, which nominally restricted the German level to one-third of the British, with potential equality in submarines, but in fact, owing to the necessary dispersal of British forces over the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Far East, gives Germany effective dominance in the North Sea.

IN THIS situation the conclusion might appear obvious that the only policy for the British Empire, for the protection of its own interests, would lie in an unreserved stand for collective security for the maintenance of peace against the fascist war offen-

sive; in unity with France, the Soviet Union, and the smaller states in Europe; and along the lines of cooperation with the United States. This conclusion is in fact drawn by certain of the most farseeing sections of the British ruling class, not only on the Liberal side, but also among the Conservative Right. In relation to the Far Eastern situation, General Smuts has repeatedly called for Anglo-American cooperation against Japan. In relation to the European situation, a ceaseless criticism of the National Government's foreign policy and an active campaign for a united stand with France, the Soviet Union, and the other League states against aggression by Nazi Germany in any part of Europe has been led by the two best known Elder Statesmen of Conservatism—Sir Austen Chamberlain and Winston Churchill—both outside the National Government, as well as supported by influential publicists such as Wickham Steed, the former editor of the Times.

Nevertheless, although this policy has all the arguments of logic and of strategy on its side, as well as brilliant advocacy, it does not win the support of the majority of the ruling class, of the Conservative Party, or of the National Government. Why? Here we come to the crux of British foreign policy. In France the clear recognition of the direct menace to France, even if Hitler should not plan immediately to attack France, of Hitler's plans of expansion in Central and Eastern Europe, and consequent necessity of an indivisible peace front for Europe as a whole has led not only the Left, but also elements of the General Staff, as interpreted by "Pertinax," to support the line of the Franco-Soviet Pact as necessary to the interests of French imperialism, despite class hostility to the Soviet Union. The bulk of the Right, represented by Laval, Tardieu, and de la Rocque, favors the line of the understanding with Hitler at the expense of the Franco-Soviet Pact; but the division in the forces of the ruling class, combined with the strength of the People's Front, has carried through the line of the Franco-Soviet Pact. But in Britain no parallel process has taken place; the reactionary forces, more or less favorable to fascism, remain dominant. Britain pursues a line contrary to any general system of collective security and in fact assists the fascist war offensive. What underlies this? Four governing trends underlying this policy may be traced.

First, the general counter-revolutionary line of British foreign policy: close class sympathies with the fascist regimes, with Hitler and Mussolini as the bulwarks against revolution in Europe, and with Japan as the bulwark against the Chinese national revolution. In particular, British financial interests are closely tied up with Hitler Germany; dominant representative of this line is Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England, working hand in hand with Schacht. London financial circles are in general openly pro-Hitler: the monarchy and

court influence is also openly pro-Hitler; the Foreign Office and Service elements are divided.

Second, and closely associated with the first: basic hostility to the Soviet Union running like a red thread through British foreign policy throughout the post-war period and not diminished, but intensified by the victory of socialism in that country and by recognition of the growing strength of the Soviet Union. The consequent favorable attitude of British bourgeois circles to Nazi Germany and Japan as champions against the Soviet Union is consciously exploited by the German and Japanese governments in order to win support for their expansionist aims. To this hostility to the Soviet Union is now added hostility to People's-Front France as "semi-bolshevist"; the peace front is regarded with suspicion as dominated by the Left and as freeing the way to the advance of the popular forces, while the fascist front is regarded as the representative of the Right.

Third, the traditional balance-of-power politics of British imperialism, expressed especially in hostility to French hegemony in Europe. This has led British policy throughout the post-war period to support the restoration of Germany as a counterweight against France; and this policy still continues although the balance is now becoming tilted to a German domination in Europe and is beginning to raise consequent alarm in British circles. Similarly, Britain has traditionally supported Japan as a counterweight against the United States in the Far East; although similarly here also the Japanese menace has now become far more direct and urgent for British interests and is consequently raising new dilemmas for British policy.

Fourth, deep-seated suspicion of the whole system of collective security as likely to involve Britain in unwanted commitments and as limiting British freedom of action. Despite formal membership in the League of Nations, and a dominating role in its midst, British policy has throughout the post-war period been openly hostile to the doctrine of collective security. Even in the drafting of the Covenant the British representatives fought against Article 10, supported by France and the United States, containing the obligation to "preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity of member states. Later British declarations have repeatedly made clear that Articles 10 and 16 were not in the British opinion to be taken literally. The 1925 British Government Declaration to the Council, drafted by Balfour, explained the British view that the League should be regarded as only an instrument for dealing with the minor "misunderstandings" or conflicts of smaller states, and as powerless to prevent wars "springing from deep-lying causes of hostility which for historic or other reasons divide great and powerful States." As late as 1934 the British Prime Minister, Baldwin, scoffed at the conception of collective security as "perfectly impracticable." The British Government Me-

random on Defense in 1935 laid down, that the existing international machinery cannot be relied on as a defense against an aggressor."

This basic hostility of British policy to collective security was not in fact changed by the short-lived episode of September, 1935, to June, 1936, during which the British Government was loudly proclaiming its devotion to the cause of collective security against the Italian aggression in Ethiopia. For this campaign was a campaign to utilize the principle of collective security as a weapon in the hands of British policy (at the same time receiving popular opinion at home, whose strength of support for collective security had been shown in the famous Peace Ballot of eleven millions). It was a call on the obligation of other states to rally to the support of British interests, while at the same time explicitly repudiating any corresponding British obligation where British interests were not involved. It was accompanied by intrigues with Fascist Italy in flagrant contradiction to the principles of the Covenant.

When this combination of egoistic and short-sighted policies had ended in breakdown, it was immediately proclaimed that collective security had failed, and that the time was now ripe to "reform" the League of Nations by limiting the obligations of collective security, and especially Articles 10 and 16. This lead was openly expressed by Lord Lothian, The Times, etc., and in more veiled form by the National Government Ministers.

IT IS this hostility to any general system of collective security as a universally binding system, cutting across Britain's liberty of decision according to its own interests in each dispute and therefore removing its role of arbiter of the balance of power, which is the key to British policy in Europe, and makes it in fact the ally of the fascist offensive. When Britain demanded French cooperation against Italian Fascism, France replied by inquiring whether Britain would guarantee an equal strictness of interpretation of the obligations of collective security in the case of any aggression by Nazi Germany.

The British Note in reply, on September 26, 1935, was evasive in the extreme: "There may be degrees of culpability and degrees of aggression . . . the nature of the action appropriate to be taken under Article 16 may vary according to the circumstances of each particular case . . . elasticity is a part of security," etc. This answer sealed the fate of any effective stand of collective security against the Italian fascist aggression. British official declarations repeatedly made clear that Britain can recognize no binding commitments except in the regions where its interests are directly affected, in Western Europe and the Mediterranean. This is inevitably equivalent to the open invitation to Hitler to act as he likes in Central and Eastern Europe, and to the Hitler "Peace" Plan of March 31 directly built on this basis. In this way British policy, while in fact fearing Hitler's growing strength and plans for expansionist war, becomes inevitably the ally of his offensive, seeking only to divert it into directions which it is hoped may not affect British interests.

Nineteen Years After

I. Far East: Kobe to Manchuli

LEV YASKIN

The author of the following travel sketches, an American merchant of Russian birth, was invalided out of the czar's army at the Austrian front in 1916 and left Russia in the summer of 1917 to recuperate in the comparative tranquillity of China. He lived there four years, during which time he mastered Chinese, and then came to America in 1921. Each spring he makes a business trip to the Far East, and this year he decided to go on to the Soviet Union to see what had happened there during his nineteen-year absence. These observations are excerpts from letters to his wife.—The EDITORS.

KOBE.

MY PLANS for visiting Russia this year have made me a little more aware of the whole Russian question, and during my trip across from Yokohama here I have been trying to find out how the average Japanese feels about the Soviet Union. They have little to say, but it boils down to this: it is bad form to do other than hate the U.S.S.R.

I was told by Mr. K——, who, as I think I know, is the manager of one of the biggest British export and import houses in Japan, that the Japanese jails are full of what are known as political prisoners. He says they are all called Communists, and he added: "Why, they're just ordinary laborers!" He told me of a big trade-union meeting in Osaka, where the discussion was

confined strictly to economic and not political questions, which was arrested and jailed en masse. Everybody was released in a few days with the exception of the leaders, who are imprisoned for an indefinite period. K——, not even a liberal, thought it scandalous.

SHANGHAI.

The Russian colony here is about the same as you saw it in 1928, except that it is even a little more degraded. The former White officers (officers only, please) have been able to get jobs in the police force of the International Settlement, where they get food and lodging and about \$10 a month; the lovely Russian blondes still try to amass a little capital for themselves and their families by being "nice" to moneyed Englishmen; the former White generals still sport their medals and hold down jobs in the emigré organizations; the whole Russian colony is still treated as something little better than half-caste. Even the Chinese despise them. And their group morale is more decadent, too. They're not getting any younger, for one thing. Little by little they've lost the assurance that "tomorrow" things will change in Russia and they'll go back to the old way of life. And the younger folks—especially the youngsters who were dragged out of school to fight the Reds—feel they've been duped, or that they bet on the wrong horse. Young G——, for example, is a bookkeeper at \$4.50 a week,

and starving on it. He'd like to go back, but he knows he can't. It's all very depressing.

S. S. SUIWO, en route from SHANGHAI to HANKOW.

Coming up the river this afternoon there was a funny little incident. The scenery along the banks of the Yang-tze hereabouts is quite wild and charming. Plenty of wild life can be seen even from aboard the steamer. The captain, a Britisher, is an ardent sportsman, and as we nosed upstream he pointed out several places as being especially good for hunting ducks, pheasants, rabbits, and so on. When he left us for a while to attend to his duties, the stout German who was standing at the rail began to splutter about the savagery of the average man, showering a torrent of abuse on the captain's head and complaining how brutal *Homo sapiens* can't keep his dirty hands off nature, but has to go around killing and destroying the little animals and birds. "Listen to their voices," he said, "how prettily they sing, while he thinks of nothing but kill, kill, kill." He went on and on in this vein till I became quite bored and abruptly changed the subject by asking him what his line of business was. He told me his occupation was selling arms and ammunition to the various Chinese war lords. He is on the way to Hangkow to close a machine-gun deal. He seemed quite puzzled at my laughter, and when I tried to explain, he still could not get it!

TIENTSIN.

The Japanese, by one means or another, indirectly when not directly, have got Tientsin under their thumb. Trucks rush through the streets flying Japanese flags. Maybe you think it's a display of patriotic feeling on the part of Japanese truck drivers. Guess again. It means, "This is smuggled goods over the border from Manchukuo. Hands off! This particular smuggler is under the protection of the Imperial Japanese Government." It seems just like a run runner under the protection of Al Capone's mob. And does it make the Chinese business men furious! They used to express polite distress at the idea of Japanese domination and political aggression, but this hits them right in the pocketbook and makes them fighting mad. And, being gentlemen of principle in a certain old-worldly sense, they are scandalized that a first-class Power, claiming rule by a divine sovereign, should resort to such low tricks.

There's another interesting consequence of this Japanese grip on Tientsin. Along with the brazen smuggling, there's a deliberate cultivation of old traditions—sort of an artificial rebirth of conservatism by bringing to life outmoded religious customs. For example, the ceremony of the coming of Buddha, which I'm told has been prohibited here as too fanatical for fifty years, made its reappearance this spring by courtesy of the Japanese henchmen who now head the Tientsin government.

MUKDEN.

Here I am in Manchuria—officially called Manchukuo—and the hotels are overrun with Japanese—officials, business men, officers—all busily consolidating the "independent" state of Manchukuo. They go to some lengths to create this impression of a new sovereign state. For example, at the frontier (on the Tientsin-Mukden train), when I got out to pay the two yen Americans have to fork over in lieu of a visa fee at home (since the U. S. Government does not recognize Manchukuo) my baggage and belongings were taken out of my compartment and dumped elsewhere, without my knowledge. That was at eight o'clock in the morning. The reason was that a party of nine or ten Manchukuoans, dressed up fit to kill in cutaways, top hats, striped trousers, and patent-leather shoes, had come aboard for a series of official visits along the route. And they needed my compartment. They were simply dressed-up dummies for the Japanese, to give the impression of a Manchukuo officialdom. They sat cooped up in three hot, stuffy compartments, in all their finery, until three in the afternoon, making pompous courtesy appearances for the benefit of the local officials at every way station. Of course the train was late and I and all the other passengers missed our connection with the Harbin train.

HARBIN.

It's nineteen years since I've been here. The place is entirely under Japanese domination, and I must say it's terribly run down

since I saw it last. Everything—houses, carriages, people—all slightly rubbed off. An old Russian provincial town. On the streets Russians everywhere, with a small sprinkling of Chinese and a few Japanese—the real masters—here and there. The Harbiner differs considerably from the Shanghai Russian. The latter is still definitely White, with the old fiery hatred of the Red still burning in his heart. The Harbiner, though talking of "those damn bolsheviks," would not mind making up with them—he would gladly take a job now in the Soviet Union, if that were possible. He explains that after all, the present bolsheviks are not like those of 1918—no longer robbers and butchers, but progressive and constructive (and you get the idea that they are a little bit too progressive for the Harbiner's taste). Maybe in time even this will wear off and Russia will again be the old mud hole the average Harbiner dreams of.

Meanwhile the Harbin Russian wanders about the town in search of his scant daily bread. He will offer a stranger German marks at half price, fake czarist jewels, an old camera, in fact, anything that is salable. But the foreigner does not bite so easily, and therefore the Whites here trade a lot among themselves. You can see them on the streets arguing loudly over a deal. This may consist of a 1914 Ingersoll watch, but being used to old-time large trading, they cannot help using big words, such as "valuta," "import," "transport," "mechanism," etc., all in connection with a poor, dilapidated old watch. In the meantime their raggedly dressed children go to imitation Old Gymnasia in imitation Old Uniforms and their teachers use imitation Old Czarist curricula. It is Easter Week now, and the whole day the church bells ring out the old tunes, the same as it used to be under the czar, and the poor White carries

his last penny to the priest, just as he used to do at home—yes, at home, the magic place most of them will never see again.

My Uncle Grischa lives in Harbin, and he had a lot to tell me of how things go for the Soviet citizen here—which he is. The whole town, it seems, is policed and officed by White Russians, under the famous old Cossack leader Semionov, who is sold body and soul to the Japanese. He and his crowd—a cross between a gangster's mob and Tammany Hall organization—annoy the Soviet Russian citizens here and grind down the White Russians. The Soviet citizens are constantly visited by his henchmen, and badgered to switch their Soviet passports for "emigrant" ones issued by Semionov. It's not a graft. It's to remove them from the protection of the Soviet Government and place them under Semionov's (Japanese) domination. All kinds of inducements are offered as well as veiled threats about the "coming day" of retribution. The Whites, who have so hard a time of it here, would frequently like to skip out and go to Shanghai or some where else to start over. But Semionov, the Japanese ordain, must issue them a passport. And this is a graft—when the White has the money to pay. Usually he hasn't, and so he stays, at the mercy of Semionov's roughneck and the Japanese, who seem to expect to make good use of these Whites one day.

I have been speaking only English to the Russians who are trainmen, immigration inspectors, etc., here, because I was warned that they would make it very difficult for a Russian to get into the Soviet Union, no matter where he came from.

MANCHUL.

The farther north we go, the colder gets. From Harbin to this desolate peasant



"You're right, the National Guard *would* be cheaper, but gunmen are more dependable."

George Price

town is thirty hours by train, and it is beastly cold although the sun is bright as summer. We were on time, because the Japanese ambassador to Germany is on this train—in my car, in fact. He is going to Berlin via the Soviet Union. We haven't had much chance to see the landscape, because the curtains have been drawn most of the time. The guards explain that it's to protect us against "bandits"—although why a bandit can't shoot through a curtained window just as well as an uncurtained one is more than I can see. The real reason, we all agree, is to prevent us from seeing the movement of troops and war materials up to the border. The train guards told us that there are practically continuous border skirmishes, in which soldiers are killed on both sides, though mostly Japanese who try to penetrate the Soviet border.

There's an interesting thing about this railroad: the tracks are wide (Russian) gauge from Harbin on up to the border, and

standard gauge from Harbin on down to China. It used to be wide gauge all the way to China, but overnight it was changed from Harbin southward. When you ask why it wasn't made standard gauge north of Harbin, too, they answer with a laugh that everything can't be done at once. It will be done some day, they answer. Things take time. But the southern section was done overnight—and the northern section is loaded with wide (Russian) gauge rolling stock on sidings, waiting, apparently, for the big day when they will thunder across the border loaded with troops and munitions.

The presence of the ambassador has borne interesting fruit. First, he has stepped off the train at various stations to confer with local officials. Whenever he does this, he is surrounded by a ring of Japanese soldiers who "guard" him by holding their bayonets at the thrust pointed not away from him, but at him. Maybe it's an old Japanese custom, but

it reminded me unpleasantly of the rumored rift between the military and civil branches of the Japanese government. Second, at night in his compartment the ambassador is guarded by two sentries before his door. One of them was a lad of nineteen who spoke perfect English. He said he had been born in Canada and raised there, and had gone on a visit to Japan. There he was grabbed and impressed into military service. He complained loudly about how badly he was treated and how he wanted to get away from Japan—so loudly, in fact, that some of us began to fear for his health in the event that the ambassador was awake and understood English. He said he had two years more to serve and then he would get out of Japan.

My next letter will be from the Soviet Union. We cross the border to Otpor tomorrow. I wonder what it will be like after nineteen years.

(To be continued.)

The Artist in the U.S.S.R.

LOUIS LOZOWICK

IN AUGUST, 1935, a group of twenty Soviet artists took an excursion along the Volga. A special boat was assigned to them, but in order to get a better view of the territory covered, they traveled so by rail, auto and airplane, on several little trips. They visited, on the way, factories, farms, settlements of national minorities; they stopped over at Kazan, the picturesque capital of the Tartar republic and Tsimbura, the center of Chapayev's heroic maneuvers; they followed the trail of the nineteenth-century peasant rebel Stenka Razin and finally arrived at their point of destination, Stalingrad (formerly Tzaritsyn). There they met and mingled with the workers in the largest tractor plant of the U.S.S.R., tramped over the new and the old sections of the town, saw new factories and apartment houses in the process of construction, talked to the people in the factories and homes, to the directors, technicians, city officials. The workers organized a banquet for the artists, staged a carnival with dancing and singing in the streets and in general gave them a hearty comradely welcome. . . . I talked to some of the artists who had been on this trip. They were stirred as never before in their lives. The new life they had seen, especially the new people, utterly unconscious, entirely lacking in obsequiousness, dignified, intelligent—left an indelible impression on their minds.

What was the reason for the excursion, and what was its purpose? It was one of several (a similar excursion, for example, was organized for the Don Basin where Stakhanov has been making recent history) arranged and paid for by the Commissariat of

Heavy Industry, preparatory to an exhibition, "Industry of Socialism." The excursion was designed to acquaint the artists with part of Sovietland. Whoever among them found a congenial theme was free to sign a contract for a given period on a given salary (of which more presently); whoever did not was under no further obligation; he counted it as one more pleasant trip in his experience. Such an excursion is quite common; hence, the circumstances that attended it and the results expected from it introduce us at once to the way the Soviet artist earns his livelihood, what determines the choice and the range of his themes, what his position is with reference to other sections of the population.

On the initiative of Sergo Orjonikidze, Commissar of Heavy Industry, a special decision was passed by the Soviet government to arrange an exhibition for the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution and the completion of the second Five Year Plan, under the general title "Industry of Socialism." A committee of about seventy-five artists, scholars, critics, political figures, worked out a thousand themes, published and described in a booklet for free distribution among artists. The themes are grouped in a certain historic sequence: the fight for the October revolution; civil war and armed struggle for the consolidation of Soviet power; the first efforts to reconstruct the ruined industry; Lenin's plan for electrification as the germ of subsequent planning; discovery and exploitation of the inexhaustible natural resources of the country under the Five Year Plan as forming the basis for the building of socialism; the transformation

of the entire country beginning with Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tashkent and ending with the arctic and the tropic regions; the new face of the former czarist colonies: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Transcaucasia; the effect of socialist industrialization on the village, on transport, on national defense, on daily life and culture; finally, the Soviet Union as the Shock Brigade of the world proletariat.

On the general background of the central idea, to show what the Soviet country was, is and how it came to be, the themes include the widest range and variety for practically every possible genre—portrait, landscape, still-life. Thus along such purely political subjects as *Taking of the Winter Palace*, *Lenin Arriving in Petrograd*, *Stalin*, *Voroshilov* and *Kirov at the White Sea Canal*, there are industrial and nature landscapes—*Baku at Night*, *Volga Flows by the Kremlin*, *Polar Night*, *Landscape of Kuzbas*, *Mountains of Turkestan*, *Mountain Chain at Alma-Ata*; along with *Kolchak Passed Here*, *White Spy Exposed*, *The Hog in the State Orchard*, we have *Saratov Bridge*, *Panorama of Stalingrad*, *The Liner Abkhazia*, *Factory Accident*, *Intourists in Moscow*, *Learning from Americans*; along with *Worker and His Family in Tretyakov Gallery*, *Dancing in Workers' Club*, *Bathing in Factory Gymnasium*, we have *Glass*, *Brick*, *Alabaster and Products of Ural Mountains*. Certain themes like *Arctic Workers reading Pushkin*, *Study Circle of Foreign Languages* will require a good deal of ingenuity in the artists to be treated adequately.

Supposing an artist is interested in the general idea of the exhibition but fails to

find anything of special appeal to him in the more than thousand subjects contained in the booklet. He is then free to suggest his own subject—in fact he is specifically invited to do so. Already about five hundred “counter-themes” have been brought forward. When the artist finally agrees to accept the assignment he signs a contract for a certain period on a salary ranging from five hundred to two thousand rubles per month. On the expiration of the contract the artist submits his pictures and stipulates a price from which the amount drawn by him in monthly fees is deducted. A board of estimate (which for Moscow consists of representatives from the Society of Moscow Artists, the Commissariat of Education and the All Russian Artists’ Cooperative) decides on the acceptance or non-acceptance of his price, while a jury of about twenty-five artists of various tendencies, critics, scholars—votes its approval or disapproval from the standpoint of the task assigned. The artist is invited to state, if he wishes, his aims and ideas and to argue the decision of the jury. I was present at a meeting while the work of such opposites as the conservative academician Grabar and the extreme radical Tishler were up for discussion. The spirit of complete tolerance is evident in the fact that both were accepted.

WHAT is the part of the government in this? To say that art is encouraged in the Soviet Union is to make a true but tame non-committal statement about the actual situation. Of course art has been encouraged, but—and this is really the crux of the whole matter—this encouragement has not been haphazard, depending on personal influences in high places or political exigencies of the moment, but has always from the very first been part and parcel of a *planned* policy, an inseparable part of all social and economic planning. Thus among the first decrees adopted, were those for the preservation of art treasures, for supplying studios and employment to artists, for progressive reorganization of schools, etc. And responsible Soviet workers have always spoken with emphasis of the three fronts, economic, political, cultural. Artists are part of the vast army of workers, physical and mental; and they are considered an essential factor in the socialist reconstruction of the country. Full members of the trade unions, they carry insurance against unemployment, accident, etc. They are artists and citizens, hence consulted on every issue that vitally affects the country. And when we read, for example, of such a vast project as the ten-year plan for the complete rebuilding of Moscow—the most gigantic scheme of city planning in history—we are not surprised to find artists actively collaborating.

It was inevitable that a revolution which abolished the private magnate in industry should have also abolished his blood-relative, the private dealer in art. Social and public patronage has grown tremendously since the first years of the revolution in exact propor-

tion with the economic progress of the country and the phenomenal cultural growth of the masses. Here is a brief cross-section characteristic of Soviet artists’ patronage during recent years: pictures for the club of the Central Committee of Bakers; pictures for the miners’ club, Red Ray; paintings, sculpture, drawings on the story of the Red Army done for the Commissariat of National Defense; series of pictures on the building of the Moscow-Volga canal for the Commissariat of Transport; portraits and studies for the U.S.S.R. Academy of Science; decorations for the newest Moscow hotel, for the Institute of Mother and Child, etc. And here is one aspect of Stakhanovism not noted anywhere in the press: the executive committee of the Don Basin where Stakhanov has been making exciting history, set aside a million rubles to engage painters, sculptors, graphic artists on a history of the region.

It might be added at this point that a contract for any such project as here outlined does not limit the artist to that project alone but leaves him free to engage in other work and thus augment his income. Practically every artist of talent has worked for the theater, taught, illustrated books, etc. Many times I asked: “Since the artists are all employed and since they are rather generous in their output is there no danger of overproduction?” Invariably the answer given was: “No.”

The cultural growth of the masses is phenomenal and not only are the museums and exhibitions filled by visiting workers from factories, collective farmers, Red Army men, all these elements take also active interest in the arts: the non-professional circles in the various arts have membership by the hundred-thousand. And some of the national minorities have just begun their education and interest in the pictorial arts. Here is a single example of the workers’ grasp and understanding of the artists’ place and his social function. During the carnival for the artists visiting Stalingrad, mentioned earlier in the article in connection with the exhibition “Industry of Socialism,” the workers of the Stalingrad factory composed the following letter to the artists, which was read on the square in front of the twenty thousand people assembled:

Comrades! The particular bit of Soviet territory on which we are all standing now—shock brigaders of the first tractor plant in the Soviet Union and representatives of Soviet intelligentsia, called upon to inspire the working class by outstanding works of art—is rich in memories.

Along the city where for six years now we have been working, turning out iron steel for the fields of our collective and state farms, flows the Volga, the great Russian river, sung about in poetry and prose, depicted by artists who saw the Volga of the “Bargemen,” the Volga of slaves of the landowners and the capitalists.

Our city was exposed to the fiercest blows

of White Guards, of internal and external counter-revolution. The great Stalinist plan, the strategy of our great leader, his personal courage and utter fearlessness have assured the heroic defense of Tzarytzyn [now Stalingrad] and the blasting of the counter revolution.

Our city became the home of the new tractor plant. On the territory of this gigantic enterprise, which undoubtedly must have amazed you, were unfolded the severest battles for new tempos, for the victory of the Stalinist plan of industrialization.

We built the factory. The ugly creatures who crawled out of their holes, to please their masters, prophesied:

“It can’t be done.”

“Yes, it can,” we replied.

Well, and now we ask: were we right or wrong? The Stalingrad tractor plant named after the iron Felix [Dzerzhinsky—L.L.] exercises with honor the function of purveying instruments that will help toward exploding the bourgeois world.

You have visited the various sections of our factory; you have become acquainted with our daily life; you have seen the men of our tractor plant and have spoken to them.

Every one of us is happy at the contact with the masters of Soviet art. Our people have matured, they follow avidly the appearance of every new book, every new picture every monument of our struggle.

For whom did the artist of old Russia work, for whom did he think and create? Can one compare the joy of creating for and in the name of those masses who are devoted unreservedly to the great work of Lenin-Stalin, with the creation for a small group of capitalists who kept hidden the outstanding masterpieces of art in their private galleries?

The victory of the proletariat who turn the course of history into a new channel must find its reflection in art. Numerous themes from our yesterdays, todays and tomorrows are still awaiting their treatment not only in literature but also in painting and in sculpture.

It is only a fraction of the many possible themes that our letter has unfolded before you: the old Volga of Repin’s “Bargemen,” the old Tzarytzyn—Tzarytzyn harassed by a ring of hostile armies, Tzarytzyn becoming Stalingrad of the victors, Stalingrad—city of the great Stalin, of the people Stalinlike mold.

Take a look at old Levitan’s “Eternal Rest.” . . . Where is it? The places familiar to all of us and so beautifully painted by Levitan now pulsate with the rhythm of socialist industry.

And the wild Tundra and the uncultivated spaces of the Far North and the exploited riches of the blossoming South and the unexplored treasures of the Altai and our rivers and seas harnessed in service of socialism—isn’t there inspiration, dear comrades, for a great abundance of

variety of themes to be found in every breath of our full and happy life, luxuriant as a garden and variegated as the palettes of the greatest masters?

With great joy we received the news that on the initiative of Sergo [Orjonikidze] the closest comrade and co-worker of our great leader Stalin, an exhibition on the theme "Industry of Socialism" is being organized for the twentieth anniversary of the Soviets.

Rank and file fighters, junior and senior commanders, all of us who have participated in the battle for the industry of socialism under your excellent leadership, Sergo, thank you for this idea.

Every piece of sculpture, every engraving in this exhibition will relate to the people the great days of our struggle and victory. The collection of pictures created for the twentieth anniversary of our invincible Soviet power will last into the ages.

Comrade painters, comrade sculptors, master craftsmen of a victorious class! Where, in what other land, in what other part of the globe is there such favorable

opportunity for artistic activity, such vast possibility for creative expression?

We trust you cannot but appreciate the powerful support extended to you by the party, the government and the workers in the heavy industry.

We are looking forward to significant canvases from you! We hope they are not mere photographs. We hope they are charged with passion. We hope they move us and our children. We hope they instill in us the joy of struggle and hunger for new achievements; reveal to us the new face of our country; show regions and republics where previously stagnation and ignorance reigned and where now prevail the joys of creative labor. We hope you portray the people of our country—the average as well as the heroic participants in our rehabilitation.

And we have faith, comrades, that our hope will be fulfilled. True representatives of Soviet art must prepare the exhibition Industry of Socialism for the twentieth anniversary.

Those will be days filled with joy to over-

flowing. And we are certain that your creations, asserting happy life and happy labor, will contribute their mite to the cup of the country's rejoicing.

We shake your hands, masters of the brush and the chisel. We await your reply to industry, to the party, to our great leader Stalin.

A reply in the form of deeds!

A reply as radiant and courageous as our life, created by the party of Lenin-Stalin!

(Signed by fifteen thousand *udarniks*—workers, master-mechanics, technicians, engineers of the Stalingrad tractor factory, named after F. Dzerzhinsky.)

The letter was finished amid thunderous applause. The Soviet press reprinted it widely. Whether as exhibiting the new intellectual maturity of the worker, the spirit of solidarity between artist and worker, the status of worker as art patron—it deserves a prominent place among the rich documents which illustrate the historic transformation of which we have the good fortune to be contemporaries.

Do I Hear a Voice?

ROBERT FORSYTHE

AT the risk of seeming anti-intellectual, I should like to mention something which has been bothering me lately. It arises from an experience a committee had with a pamphlet. The author who had promised to write it begged off at the last moment. He was "at work on a book." The committee, in the face of this, dropped their voices to the proper pitch of awe and backed out reverently. In radical circles the fear that art may be sacrificed to expediency has reached such proportions that the mere mention of a book throws everybody into a state of adoration.

The truth is that this particular book, if ever finished, will reach an approximate sale of 238 copies and be read principally by the relatives of the author and critics anxious to prove that he is a jackass. The pamphlet, even if badly written, would reach many thousands and do a great deal more good than the book. If brilliantly written it might reach hundreds of thousands. There is at least one radical pamphlet which has sold over a million copies in this country—Albert Thys Williams's questions and answers on the Soviet Union.

When I say that the pamphlet will do more good than the book, I run into the question of whether it will do the author more good. Possibly not. And that is where the anti-intellectual thing comes in. For years the worst curse of the revolutionary movement was that competent artists—writers, poets, painters—were being sacrificed as

organizers or party workers. A good organizer is a thing of joy forever and when the accounts are totted up in the end, one organizer may prove to be more important than three immortal poets; but it happened that many of the writers had merely ceased writing and become punk organizers. The swing away from that has reached a new level in which art has almost recovered the sacrosanct odor of the Yellow Book period. There is now a school of thought firmly established on the theory that the matter of France going Communist is of much less importance than getting Jim Farrell's critical thinking straightened out. As a general thing I am in favor of that but it has its limitations. If what a writer wants is immortality (and he surely isn't thinking of wealth in terms of a left-wing novel), he may be adopting the wrong tactics in preferring his book to a pamphlet. I'm not prepared to argue the question and will apologize to anybody who confronts me with refutation in a belligerent way, but it occurs to me that in this age of turmoil it is quite possible that the great art will turn out to have been pamphleteering.

This may be merely sour grapes on my part because I am not a novelist, but it seems to me that any author would be content to be a pamphleteer of the quality of Dean Swift or Voltaire. Something will really have to be done about this reverence for the novel. It is a great form but it is not the only form and there are times when something

else can be more important, even artistically.

AT the very worst, let me suggest that there are times and times. It is perfectly true that an artist must be allowed to be an artist, but for a revolutionary artist to accept that as literal truth is to transport him to the ivory tower as firmly handcuffed as the lily-est esthete. For the sake of argument, it might be agreed that for a week a year he be allowed his freedom among the groundlings. There is always the possibility that he may stay away so long that when he returns he will find the American Liberty League in charge of affairs and rather brutal toward his work of art. André Malraux must have had something of the sort in mind when he gave time from his work to organize the meeting of revolutionary writers in Paris and went into the streets on behalf of the People's Front. Novels of the type Malraux or Louis Aragon or Romain Rolland write are not going to be received gladly in France if Col. de La Rocque takes over.

For that reason I believe that at intervals we writers should give ourselves over to the utilitarian and non-artistic endeavor of knocking hell out of our enemies before they begin it on us. I have an idea for a series of pamphlets. Just as a suggestion they might be on the following subjects:

William Randolph Hearst

The du Ponts

The American Liberty League

Father Coughlin

Eugene G. Grace and the American Iron and Steel Institute.

These pamphlets are to be written by the finest writers in America, on the basis that the people attacked are enemies of liberty, happiness, and the arts. They may be written in the classical manner of Swift or Voltaire, but I hope I can prevail upon the writers who will volunteer to help to make them something new in the way of pamphlets.

What I want are pamphlets which will reach the millions. They will have very little text and a great many pictures. I want to enlist the services of such artists as Redfield, Gropper, Rea, Hilton, Mackey, Robert Day, Garrett Price, Peter Arno, James Thurber. Since the pictures will be so good, the text will have to be superb. It will need

to be brief and hard-hitting and incisive and satiric to the point of pain. Many of the pamphlets the radicals now have are extremely good but because they are well-considered and thoughtful analyses, they are hard to read. What I want are pamphlets which are equally high in quality but so readable that they can be understood even by secretaries of small town Chambers of Commerce.

We'll need humor, a great deal of it, but not an ounce of whimsy. We're out to tell the truth about these people and it will undoubtedly be insulting from their point of view.

At the risk of repeating all the old truths about "civilization at the crossroads," "life on the brink of the abyss," I think it safe to say that what happens within the next few

years in checking the growth of fascism will have effect upon the future for a century come. For us to sit around with our li books at a time like this seems suicidal don't want anybody to cease being an ar but in all sincerity I want to ask a few the best to join me in reaching the milli instead of the hundreds. It may only b temporary need, but it is a crying one n

We need to show the people what sort people these du Ponts and Raskobs and M gans and Al Smiths and Coughlins and Cl ley Schwabs are who would like to rule We can do it with ridicule and facts a laughter.

One pamphlet now like Tom Pair *Appeal to Reason* can save the arts for of us. After that it will be time to go b to our books.

The Sheriff

BEN FIELD

THE sheriff's office in the county courthouse is wallpapered with notices of sheriff sales and foreclosures: "By virtue of writ of *fieri facias*" and "by virtue of writ of *levari facias*." That is the hog Latin to root the farmers off the land and smash them under hoof.

I wait all morning long in the office. The sheriff does not show up. I have written him, phoned him for an appointment. The Farmers National Weekly has sent me down to find out about this famous penny sale where \$2,000 worth of a farmer's goods were sold by a committee of farmers for two dollars, where a deputy shot at the farmers, wounding one; and where the aroused farmers roughhoused the deputy and the sheriff in a manure pile.

I go out into the tree-shaded town and interview the leaders of the town, a banker, a clergyman and a well-known physician.

The banker cries that hell's on tap these days among the farmers. Private property must be protected. The sheriff is a fine fellow, has been patient as Job with the farmers. But now the sheriff knows that he has the backing of the whole community, he may even call on the militia. As he talks, a vein stands out like a whip on the banker's forehead.

The clergyman leans back in an easy chair, his fingers together in a steeple over his belly. "We can't have confiscation. I've studied socialism. I believe in putting some of its tenets into practice, but we can not have confiscation. Our sheriff has been reasonable. We have nothing to complain of on that score. But there's an end to patience."

The physician said, "I was ready to treat

the farmer that was shot. He did not call on me. The sheriff wasn't responsible. He's one of the best men in our county ever to have held that office. The farmers are just a little off now. They'll see things in the right way soon. They have had some outside agitator working on them, some Communist. In Russia they've learned you can shoot a farmer, but you can't make a Communist out of him. Surely, we back the action of the sheriff. But let me tell you one thing: the farmer is an American. He knows who his friends are. He is the backbone of our country." And the well-known physician, who has money invested in mortgages, leads me out of the dim, comfortable room to the door, his hand up as if he were examining a clinical thermometer.

I GO back to the sheriff's office and wait. An hour before closing time, a little, bespectacled man, escorted by a bull-faced gent, comes into the office. It is the sheriff with his deputy.

The cornered little sheriff blinks anxiously at his deputy, takes off his panama hat and invites me into the inner office. He sits down, his plump white hands playing with a fountain pen. The deputy hangs around the desk in the outer office, his small, hard eyes on me.

The little sheriff pops out swiftly that he has nothing against the farmers. It is his business to protect the farmer. Why, he's in sympathy with the farmer. His own father farmed. He himself was raised on a farm. He's a friend of the farmer.

I ask about the notices of sheriff sales and foreclosures hung on the wall.

The sheriff flushes. "That's the law. It's

my duty. In the old days the sheriff had job of hanging. If he didn't like it, the thorities could always get someone else. farmers elected me . . ."

"To hang them?"

The little sheriff laughs and glances i the other room where the deputy is ir bunch of papers like a bull in hay.

The sleek little sheriff says, "A g sheriff don't believe in violence. There' law. The lawyer sees that the wr executed. The sheriff is sent to protect lawyer. The farmers are unreasonable. wanted them to appoint a committee to with us. 'No,' they yell. 'We're all committee!' They give us the rush, yell 'Let's hang the lawyer.'"

No, there wasn't any rope. But it's duty of the sheriff's office to protect the l yer. The deputy took out his gun to s

RESTAURANTS

ONLY "MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN" stay out in the mid-day sun," sang Noel Coward. We too go lyrical and sing of our refreshin' salads, cool vegetables, dairy products and fresh fish, served in cool calm surroundings. Scoff at the mid-day sun! Come in and let the difference.

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Also a la carte

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What Thaelmann Stands For

ARNOLD ZWEIG

HAIFA.

WHEN a man celebrates his fiftieth birthday in prison—as Ernst Thaelmann did recently—he receives as gifts the earnest wishes, hopes, and thoughts of the entire working masses of the world, all its intellectuals who are worthy of the name. Ernst Thaelmann has been held imprisoned by the Hitler regime for over three years, without any attempt at a trial being held.

It may be well to recall certain facts on this occasion. Do you know now that the Reichstag was set on fire by the Communists? Do you still remember the hundred tons of leaflets and pamphlets that were found in the secret passages of the Liebknecht House during the twentieth or twenty-first search of the premises made by the Berlin police? Do you know that the unbridled ruler of Germany, with his main assistants, Goebbels and Goering, informed the colleagues of the New York Staats-Zeitung that unassailable proof had been found that the Communists had intended to set fire, not only to the Reichstag and the Schloss, but also to every public building in Germany?

In connection with these deeds the leader of the German Communist Party, Ernst Thaelmann, was arrested March 3, 1933. He was accused of the crime of high treason—and today, three years later, no trial can take place, since the concepts of justice, procedure of trial, proof and judgment, held by German judges, are not always what the Third Reich and its ministers require.

Meanwhile, two men have become symbols of solidarity, not solidarity among governments, but among peoples, that melan-

choly tribe so easily abused and with so much difficulty led in its own interests. Carl von Ossietzky, the courageous fighter for peace, and Ernst Thaelmann, the leader of a party of the working class, which has been accused without rhyme or reason of the most repelling crimes; of crimes of which the very party ruling today in Germany was guilty at the command of its masters (and even without its command), and which it has ascribed to Marxists, Socialists and Jews. We Jewish working men and women of Palestine, laborers and brain workers, those who have been here for years and those who have only just come, we turn today to Ernst Thaelmann with the emotions and thoughts of an almost joyful confidence.

We know because of our former struggles with him and his party that he also is of this conviction: it is not important that a man live; important it is that a great cause live. Just as Judaism and the Church became great through their martyrs, just so struggle amidst us present-day martyrs and prisoners, especially the latter, for eternal ideals and their realization: for the idea of freedom, of "fairness" in political struggle, for justice in the lives of individuals and of groups, for a saner construction of human society and for the liberation of the earth kept hitherto in continuous strife by small groups of beasts of prey. At present in Germany and elsewhere these beasts of prey imprison human beings. Let us strive unceasingly—and never be swerved from this purpose—for the day when—

When the common front of those now attacked shall be strong enough to make sure that these beasts of prey be caged.

farmers. The farmers jumped him. The deputy went off.

Was the deputy disarmed?

The farmers tore the gun out of the deputy's hands. The little sheriff's nostrils quivered. The farmers brought all this on themselves. Putting up their own commitments, compelling the rest of the public to do what they order, selling \$2,000 worth of odds for two dollars!

What would the sheriff suggest as the way out for the farmers?

The way for the farmers to tackle the situation is to get the creditors together and talk it over with them. See if you can hold them off so the farmers get a chance to get back on their feet.

If the creditors won't be held off?

"Then it's in the law's hands." The sheriff pushes out his full red lips as if he were trying something hot.

What action will the authorities take now?

The sheriff's fenced-in, watery eyes sharpen a second behind his spectacles. He says, "That depends on the farmers."

I slap down before him an invitation from the farmers to the sheriff inviting him to an open hearing on the shooting. This time he cannot ignore it. He rises, flustered. He mutters his plump little hands. He rustles the letters and telegrams on his desk, protesting the shooting. "Sorry," he mutters, "I'm kind busy. Got my hands full."

I leave the sheriff and drive out into the country to visit the farmer who was shot. He lies in his bare bedroom, surrounded by neighbors who've tramped in after the day's chores. The farmers pick to pieces the little sheriff.

They had several committees to see the sheriff's lawyers before the sale. The lawyer threatened to teach them a lesson. When the sheriff, deputy and the lawyer drove into the cowyard and saw 200 farmers assembled, the deputy clambered out of the car slapping his gun pocket for everybody to see. The sheriff and lawyer put their heads together and decided to postpone the sale. The farmers with one voice cried to hold the sale right then and there.

The sheriff shouted, "I want you men to know this motion is under the jurisdiction of the county. I'm the law here."

"We're the law," cried the farmers, closing in on their "friends."

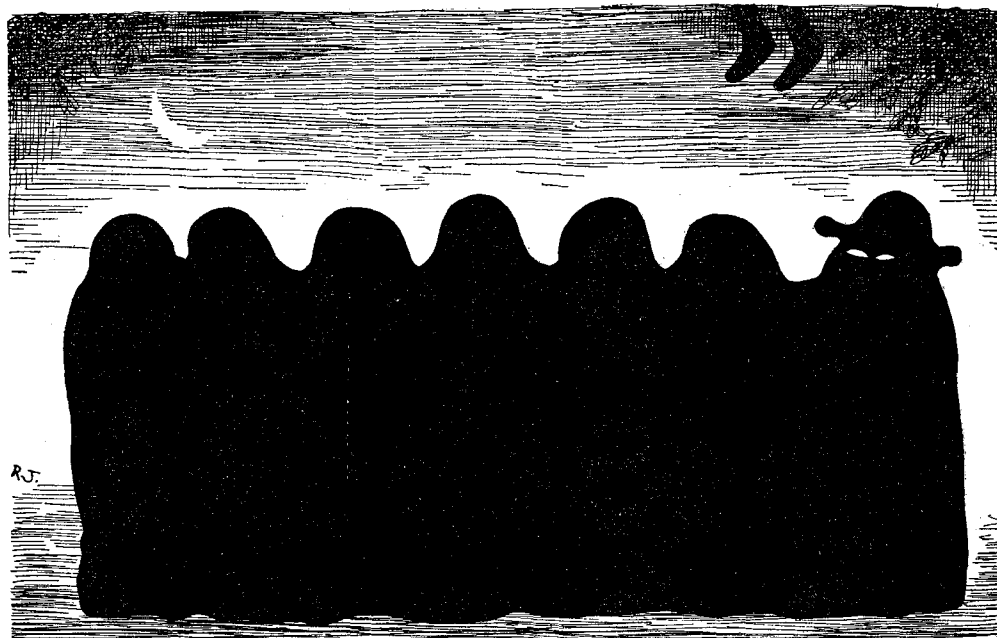
The deputy whipped out his gun and fired. A bunch of farmers hurled themselves at the deputy and brought him down with a face in the manure.

The farm leader, an "outside agitator" called, "Now, Sheriff, this is a farm and this is a manure pile. This is a farmers' community. You're the hired man. We're the law and the law."

The sheriff shouted, "I'll arrest you."

The farmer said with a smile, "Name your charges, please."

The law said nothing. For the deputy had his mouth full and the sheriff his hands.



"And for \$2.50 all you have to do is to fight unionism, Communism, and Darwinism and work ten hours in the mill."

Our Readers' Forum

Freezing Out Minority Parties

If a Farmer-Labor Party is to make any genuine headway in this country, it will first have to overcome what amounts to a deliberate conspiracy to keep minor parties off the ballot. Many states make this necessary condition to election victory almost impossible.

Take, for example, the case of North Carolina. The Socialists, thinking to place their ticket on the ballot in 1932, were told that a total of 10,000 signatures would be necessary. One election-board official, since that time appointed to high national office in the judiciary, apologized for the high requirement by saying, "We hafta do somethin' to keep the Communists off, 'cause they got a nigger on the ticket." But the Socialists were game, and at great expense and time secured the signatures and thereby got their presidential electors on the ballot. Apparently playing for the votes of the liberals in the state, Democratic politicians (among them the chairman of the election board) publicly announced that in the next legislative session there would come into being a new election law that "would treat minority parties more fairly."

And here is what they did. Whereas in 1932 the 10,000 names required had to be merely voters of the state, in the new "fair" election law such signers are required to declare themselves members of the party in question and have to promise to help organize the same. Now since most of North Carolina's Socialists are workers (there were 5,591 Socialist ballots in 1932), very few would dare risk their jobs by thus openly declaring their party affiliation. Obviously, the Communists are even worse off. The effect, therefore, was virtual disfranchisement.

Unless such laws and officials are effectively counteracted, the possibilities for a new anti-reaction party in 1940 are extremely slight. The pot-bellied politicians in the various state capitols will attend to that.

E. E.

From Another Hearst Employee

The article "I Work for Hearst" in this week's issue is very encouraging to other Hearst workers like myself. And I think it is doubly important in the sense that it shows the world that all of us who get our salaries from America's would-be Hitler do not share his stinking reactionary opinions.

I am a reporter on "America's greatest evening newspaper," and I am also a subscriber to NEW MASSES, because I like to read the truth at least once a week.

More power to NEW MASSES and let there be more "I Work for Hearst" articles exposing this louse for what he is and what he hopes to be.

A JOURNAL REPORTER.

Terrorizing Citrus Workers

Down here in sunny California the dark clouds of fascism are gathering rapidly and ominously. Vigilantes, Red-baiters, and terror are running rampant. Every large paper is engaging in a hysterical Red-baiting crusade. Recent events are only the logical outcome of such poisonous propaganda.

During the past week the citrus workers have been on strike in Placentia. After the hiring of strike-breakers and the calling out of the police, who used their usual brutal tactics, the climax was reached Friday, July 10.

The 150 strikers were holding a peaceful meeting when a band of vigilantes, armed with tear-gas bombs and clubs, stole upon them, fell upon the dumbfounded workers without warning, smashed jaws and cracked heads, dispersed the group save for one striker left lying on the ground smashed into unconsciousness.

The next morning the yellow press came forth

with headlines praising the "heroism" of the vigilantes—loyal American citizens fighting the Red menace, etc., etc., ad nauseam.

The more enlightened Evening News, published by Manchester Boddy, investigated the case and disclosed the fact that the "heroic" vigilantes were "twenty-eight Los Angeles bums, recruited from streets and beer-halls through a detective agency and paid eight dollars a day by the citrus growers to foment violence and terrorize the striking Mexican pickers."

Henceforth, nothing that happens in this Hearst-Chandler infested area should be cause for surprise. Secret bands and organizations are sprouting up like mushrooms. The notorious Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Thomas, founder and a leader of the Christian American Crusade is preaching his gospel of fear and hate twice a day on the radio. From every quarter the Red scare is being raised.

Perhaps the picture I paint is not a pretty one. But I am frankly pessimistic. The forces of reaction compel me to be so. The vultures of fascism are loose.

ADOLF CHERN.

On Singable Poems

Will you please give me written permission to use the text of "The Slow Ride," by Robert Allison Evans, published in THE NEW MASSES, for a song? It's one of comparatively few left-wing poems which lend themselves well to a simple musical setting. We composers are at our wits' end to find suitable texts. Apparently few poets give any thought to the requirements of music, which is understandable enough—they're not writing for composers. But, though the material of our poets is often magnificently stimulating to the musician, the form seldom lends itself well to setting except in the so-called "art-song," which is dead, so far as the music of the workers' movement is concerned. I wish it were possible to talk to a lot of these poets, to discuss with them how, without great effort on their parts, a lot of their material could be made available not only to the reader, but also to the musical audience. There's something for consideration by the next Writers' Congress.

GEORGE STRONG.

Worth Watching

Why an open hearing on this alleged naval spy? Aren't they usually closed to the public?

I am suggesting this for your editorial comment. I hope you have a reporter on the spot.

J. B.

In Defense of Free Education

Free public higher education in New York City has repeatedly been the object of attacks by small groups who have been willing to reduce taxes at the expense of an enlightened citizenry. Thus far it has withstood the attacks, furnishing ample evidence to the unrepresentative character of these organizations.

The self-appointed citizens' Budget Commission, Inc., which recently proposed that the students at the three city colleges be required to pay \$75 per year for tuition, represents the interests of a small banking and realty clique rather than the interests of the vast majority of the city's taxpayers.

It is significant that the report of the commission did not even consider the ability of the students to pay.

Had the Commission investigated this question, it might have found some embarrassing details. It might have found, for example, that at the City College, about one-seventh of the student body is dependent upon and receives fifteen dollars per month from the federal government's National Youth Administration (N. Y. A. funds are extended to those in the direst need); that this figure represents only the quota allotted to the college; that the number of applications exceeds this quota by 250%.

When so large a proportion of students have to be supplied with money for carfare and lunch, it is quite evident what the imposition of a \$75 tuition fee would mean.

Public higher education is the practical application of the ideal of equality of opportunity; it is one of the earmarks of a true democracy. If the City of New York adopts the plan of the Citizens' Budget Commission, this ideal will become a myth.

The city should be proud of its public colleges—colleges which have attained national eminence by their high scholastic standards.

We call upon the city's true citizens, not its Citizens' Budget Commission, Inc., to oppose the efforts of a minority group to deny deserving young people the right to a college education.

American Student Union
City College Chapter,
SIMON SLANN, Chairman.

A 15-Week Lockout

One of the most heartening signs in the labor world has been the increasing interest shown by, as active participation of, non-labor groups in the everyday struggles of workers for better living conditions. This splendid cooperation has been a mainstay in more than one strike that came to victory.

The forty-five workers who were locked out at Ohrbach's for union activity have been out on the picket line for fifteen weeks. The fine, militant spirit of these young men and women has enlisted the sympathies of scores of organizations. Trade unions have supported them financially and on the picket line; the International Labor Defense lawyers have fought tirelessly to protect their rights in the courtrooms; the League of Women Shoppers has helped in numerous ways. This league has on several occasions sponsored entertainments to raise the much-needed funds to carry on this fight.

It takes not only "guts" to carry on a struggle of the type now going on at Ohrbach's: it takes lots of money. The locked-out workers need money for bail, stationery, carfare, and the thousand and one other necessities, without which they cannot go on. If anyone cares to help, funds should be sent to Department Store Employees Union Local 1250, 52 W. 42nd St., New York City.

FLORENCE JACOBSON,
For the locked-out Ohrbach workers.

Critical Self-Criticism

In comparing the British with the American editions of Mayer's life of Engels, I see that the former has a preface by Mayer himself (although it omits the Introduction by G. D. H. Cole) in which he calls the book "a new biography, which I have written for the English-speaking world."

From this it is clear that Mayer himself is responsible, and not merely his editor, for the character of the book, which he frankly says "leaves the theorist in the background."

Therefore I must withdraw a good deal of what I wrote to you, at least the part tending to exonerate Mayer. The book, of course, is not a "new biography," as comparison with the two-volume original shows. It merely omits the more important parts of the original.

I apologize for my initial outburst and in view of Mayer's own preface agree with the spirit of your objections to the book.

HARRY J. MARKS.

Cambridge, Mass.

[In the July 7 issue of THE NEW MASSES a letter was published from the author of the above in which he made certain criticisms of a review by Isidor Schneider of Gustav Mayer's life of Frederick Engels. The review was published in the issue of June 9.]

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Left-Wing Literature in Britain

LONDON.

WHILE politically we here in England seem to be living in a state of suspended animation and are doing our best to relieve the tenuous atmosphere with such breaths of life as we may draw from across the Channel, culturally at any rate we are in the midst of interesting developments. At last our contemporary literary consciousness seems to be catching up with our contemporary social being. Everywhere our intellectuals are looking Left and it is becoming more and more impossible not to do so and still remain intelligent. In the last two years the output of left-wing writers on politics and general sociological subjects has grown enormously not only in quantity but also in intellectual quality. Further, these writers are becoming more and more impregnated with Marxism. Marxism, indeed, has become all the fashion and in contrast with the ridiculous neglect to which it was subjected until very recently, is receiving an attention that is in some cases embarrassing in its urgency. But this acceleration in the production and Marxization of left-wing political literature is new only in range and extent. What is essentially new and, some would say, of more ultimate importance is the fact that literature, in the strict sense as "fine art," is at last beginning to shake off its tradition of intellectual loafiness and to penetrate the social realities of contemporary life. Aldous Huxley, for example, who hitherto, from the safe retreat of his intellectual abstractions, had poured pitying, cynical scorn on the wretched humanity beneath him has now, in his new book, *Eyeless in Gaza*, taken up arms against inaction as an active, missionary pacifist. The act that his new creed, with its ingenuous belief in the salvation of the world through individual psychological ascetics and external socio-economic arrangements in the light of reason, is hopelessly unrealistic is not as important as the fact that a literary artist of the importance of Mr. Huxley has at last seen clearly the need for social action on the part of the intelligentsia against the forces of reaction.

And Mr. E. M. Forster who, like Huxley, has had his literary inspiration choked by the scene of social chaos around him has, in his recently published *Ainger Harvest*,¹ put on permanent record his magnificent address of last year to the International Congress of Writers at Paris and thereby, together with the whole tenor of this book of reprinted writings, shown definitely where he stands.

But there is more to it than that. Not only have our literary artists begun to grapple with social realities; they are even beginning to become class conscious. We have begun to produce a definitively proletarian literature of our own. In the last two years writers like Bates, Blumenfeld, Heslop, Hanley, etc., have been laying the foundations. But perhaps even more important than individual works is the fact that in the last few months proletarian literature has definitely been brought into the forefront of general critical discussion. So much so that even our bourgeois pundits of literary criticism have begun to sit up and take notice. It was definitely a revolutionary step when no less a paper than the Times Literary Supplement devoted the leading article² of its February 22 issue to a discussion on the "American Writers Congress" and "Proletarian Literature in the U. S." (both published in England by Lawrence). No finer and more prominent advertisement could have been dreamed of. This was followed by a long and important discussion on proletarian literature in the London Mercury (March to May).

In both these discussions the line is taken, in true English fashion, that proletarian literature is a legitimate, indeed—considering the gravely anemic state of present-day bourgeois literature—highly desirable, new form of literary art. Its revolutionary character is deliberately glossed over. The Times Literary Supplement offers up the hope that this new literary phenomenon will not allow its Marxian form to enslave its artistic spirit and tries to reduce its political significance to a minimum. The London Mercury follows suit, and, after welcoming proletarian literature as bringing a much-needed impetus to outworn literary conventions, adds the thought that it may at the same time provide a useful safety valve for social discontent and so act as a social deterrent to political strife.

So much, then, for literary movements. Now for some recent and one forthcoming book.

Ernst Toller's *Letters from Prison* (John Lane) has been hailed on all sides as a distinguished accession to the increasingly important body of prison literature. Many of these letters deal with his plays (some of which, of course, he wrote while in prison) and in these letters, as well as in others, Toller has delivered himself of judgments on the nature and purpose of proletarian literature. In particular he comments on

Masses and Man and the *Machine Wreckers* and underlines the mysticism, or as he would prefer to call it, the "spirituality" of the former and the symbolism of the latter, thus enabling us clearly to see how Toller misconceived his function as a revolutionary writer. The purpose of such a writer is "to create the cultural medium for revolution" (as Waldo Frank has well put it) in terms of "socialist realism." Realism need not be representational; it can grasp the sum and essence of things and yet make that sum and essence recognizable in human terms. Toller, overcome by his intensely personal vision, has failed to resolve it into forms which are realistic without being photographic, imaginative without being mystical. To question the ultimate reality of economic and political facts, to doubt even the reality of personal existence (as he keeps on doing in his literary judgments in these letters) may be all very well for the metaphysical solipsist or the mystical poet, but not for the artist who would "strengthen the proletariat's will for freedom."

But Toller was a politician as well as a dramatist of the proletariat and in these letters he alternates his artistic judgments with political commentary. From some of these, especially in those that illustrate his unscientific attitude to revolutionary action, we are helped to see why the German Revolution of 1918-19 was such a fiasco. But on the other hand, when he is merely observing events and not passing judgment on them, he can be surprisingly good and at times his insight into the future development of Germany is almost uncanny in its prescience. Indeed it is not too much to say that the whole tone and feel of life in the German Republic is more vividly represented in Toller's book of letters than in all the pretentious documentation and research of Herr Heiden's *Hitler*.³ This is a badly written book and makes most uncomfortable reading. The whole thing is done in the modern jazz style with arbitrary chapter headings and innumerable small subsections and so on. The treatment is done in terms of psychological-personal analysis interlarded with snippets of social facts. The book wears a specious appearance of critical judgment but is really a most superficial and unconvincing work. Nowhere is there any real organization of the mass of laboriously accumulated facts, nowhere any unitary interpretation of the man and his background. Time and again the book alternates between a sensational account of Hitler the man and a journalistic record of the movement. We leave the book with a convincing picture of neither.

¹ Reviewed in our July 7, 1936, issue.

² Reprinted in our June 30, 1936, issue.

³ Published in America by Alfred A. Knopf.

Still another life of Karl Marx⁴ is promised us, this time by Nicolayevsky and Maenchen-Helfen, to be published by Methuen in the autumn. Mehring may rest in peace, for his monumental life of Marx⁵ will remain unchallenged as the authority on the subject.

In any case, the intention of the authors is much more modest than to attempt to supplant him. Their aim is the strictly limited one of presenting Marx as "the fighter," "the strategist of the class struggle." They themselves perceive and readily admit the difficulty of separating the practical politician from the thinker in the case of one who enunciated, with the force of a revolutionary doctrine, the indissoluble unity of theory and practice. The difficulty is, indeed, an almost insuperable one, but the authors have done their best to overcome it—and a very creditable best it is—by bringing in Marx's theoretical discoveries, wherever possible, in an intelligibly summarized form and with the minimum of distraction from the practical story they have to tell.

In this sense then, this book is a valuable corrective to Mehring's classic work, which suffered from the excessive burden of theoretical exposition it had to carry. Mehring's work, indeed, was perhaps a main, though unintentional, cause of a tendency which has, in so many quarters, led to Marx being regarded as nothing more than an arm-chair philosopher-sociologue "who died from eating dust in the British Museum."

Important, too, is the way in which the authors of this book have been able to incorporate a great deal of new documentation and research and thereby to correct Mehring in such matters as Marx's attitude to Lassalle and Bakunin. And this new material enables them to demonstrate with greater emphasis what should have been obvious all along to honest students of Marx—namely his untiring efforts to preserve a united front among his supporters. So far was he from being the intolerant fanatic of bourgeois and anti-Marxist imagination that, as this book well shows, Marx exhausted himself in attempting to reconcile and compromise differences in the movement and only moved to a final breach when postponement would have meant fatal injury to the cause. The remarkable thing is that in each case history has proved Marx and not his opponents to have been in the right.

Since the Webbs' epoch-making *Soviet Communism*,⁶ new books on the U.S.S.R. have been distinguished by their absence. Indeed, after such an achievement, it would

argue a high degree of courage or, alternatively, of irresponsibility to produce such a book. In the case of *Under the Bolshevik Uniform* (Thornton Butterworth) by one Vladimir Lazarevski, we are compelled, unfortunately, to assume the latter alternative. As one would expect from the title, this book is avowedly anti-Communist propaganda. The author has claimed for it the merits of an objective, thoroughly documented study and declares that he has relied "almost exclusively" on Russian sources. In actual fact, however, on all the really vital matters, the sources of his statistics, etc., are not given and where he does quote his sources it is generally in the case of damaging bits of observation made by the Russian

Communists themselves, in the course of their daily self-criticism in the press—observation which have been torn from their essential contexts.

The book is nothing if not thorough. In fact the author tries to prove too much. For example the Soviet army is at once a dreadful menace to European peace and hopelessly weak and inefficient (the latter for the benefit of the French whose signing of the Franco-Soviet pact has so annoyed M. Lazarevski).

The book, however, has at least one useful purpose; it provides the reader with an admirable opportunity of returning to the Webbs' masterpiece with an added appreciation of its value. DAVID ROLAND.

The Travels of Lester Cohen

TWO WORLDS, by Lester Cohen, Covici, Friede. \$3.50.

THIS is an important book for two reasons. First, its contents are concerned with the most dramatic struggle in the world's history, the death battle between an old, yet powerful system of living and a new, increasingly virile system for living. Secondly, this book describes this struggle in a style that is unique.

Lester Cohen has been one of the few writers in Hollywood who have not been content to confine their literary ambitions to adapting *Of Human Bondage* to the screen and to concocting emotional conveyances for Miss Katherine Hepburn. Mr. Cohen used to wonder about the world, sitting in his Hollywood pigeonhole reading a newspaper brought to him by the turnkey's son, and his wonder was direct and somewhat naïve and mingled with what reviewers call "a social consciousness." Along with his social inquisitiveness he carried the technique of telling a story à la Hollywood, that is, in terms of quickly-moving images, self-explanatory. Mr. Cohen has the faculty of getting to the bottom of things in a hurry. Crossing on the *Ile de France*, he noted that it was a very fine boat, but the persons who worked on the boat didn't seem very happy.

There is a pale melancholy about them, and other than the times when they are putting out the deck chairs or serving table you hardly see them. It is as if they led some strange pallid life below, and they do, filtering down iron gangways, brooding in a rather prison-like sufferance of bars and tiers, filing up again when they are needed.

I asked one of them why he wasn't happy—"Oh, Monsieur, we are happy," said he.

I kept looking into his eyes—"They have cut our wages," said he.

This incident sets the tone of the book, both in its content and form. Mr. Cohen has very wisely chosen a world cruise in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. It is a rare experience, provided one asks

questions and doesn't gaze solely at Bal girls and Hindu princes. Lester Cohen wanted to see Palestine and India. "In Paris representatives of the British Empire would not grant him an Empire visa. He would have to see London. In London he had to see The Chief. The Chief, who has no other name to Mr. Cohen, noted that Mr. Cohen was going to Russia, that Mr. Cohen was a writer and that Mr. Cohen was Mr. Cohen. The Chief had been trained in Anglo-Saxon logic: a Jew plus a writer plus a trip to Russia equals a Communist agitator. Consequently, Palestine and India are controlled countries. Mr. Cohen wanted to know in what way Palestine and India were controlled.

"Oh, certain sorts of people . . . not want there," said he.

"Might I inquire as to the sorts of people?" "People of certain ideas," said he. And looking at me—"May I ask, Mr. Cohen, if you went to Palestine and India, what you would expect to see?"

"The life."

"Hm," said he.

In Palestine Lester Cohen saw plenty. He was there a very short time but was able, as is possible for any astute and uncommitted observer, to note the basic conflicts. Mr. Cohen was not attempting to record an entire country, small as it is, in transition. He recorded the big issues, the obvious which is so overlooked by writers who have spent many years in Palestine. When I was in Palestine, Zionist writers told me I had to remain a year in that country before I could write with any understanding. An Arab newspaper man told me that one day was sufficient—if I had the eyes. In a highly compressed dialogue, the technique for which Mr. Cohen learned at Hollywood University, he states the problem—not all of it—but enough for any reader to understand the main issue. An Arab told Mr. Cohen that the English have promised to keep Palestine an Arab country. A Jew tells Mr. Cohen that the English have

⁴To be published in America by Lippincott.

⁵Published in America by Covici, Friede. Reviewed in THE NEW MASSES in the June 9, 1936, issue.

⁶Published in America by Charles Scribner's Sons. A Book Union selection. Reviewed in our April 28, 1926, issue.

promised to make Palestine a Jewish homeland. To which the Arab replied that the English make too many promises and the only thing therefore to do was to take the land away from the Jew. "Let 'em try it," said the Jew, and he told Mr. Cohen that there were "Jewish fascists" who "wanted to do unto the Arabs as the German fascists had done unto them." One Jew, when political secretary of the Jewish Agency, pleaded for an Arab-Jewish state, but he had been killed. Mr. Cohen was told that the Jews had killed him, "But no one was found guilty at the trial." This synopsis is most inadequate if it is to serve as a summary of the situation in Palestine, but as an index it is most illuminating.

India is not so complex. On board boat, heading there, Mr. Cohen met a typical colonial agent of British imperial business, who hated India and all Hindoos. If India was so objectionable, Mr. Cohen asked, why not back. "And what would I do at 'ome?" the colonial asked Mr. Cohen. "I aynt good enough fer 'em at 'ome, I aynt got the wank. I get ten times what I'd get at 'ome." He talked about his big house, servants, horses, cars.

In India Cohen saw the white man's urden. Madras, with a population of 100,000 people, has been in British hands since the seventeenth century, but the best hotel had no plumbing—a hotel for whites.

The natives had no hotels, but they used the same sanitary methods as the civilizers.

And so on into China, the grab-bag for every imperialism.

Lester Cohen visited the Soviet Union. He saw the other world and it was new and somewhat strange. Few individualists in a transitory stage feel at home in the Soviet Union. Cohen could penetratingly analyze the world in which he had been born and raised. His humor, so effective in satirizing the selfishness and inanities of the old world, was at times lacking in his sincere attempt to understand the construction and the goal of the new world. His individualism was agitated by some of the contradictions. Speaking at a literary evening with Soviet writers, he was asked his opinion of the U.S.S.R. and he replied by criticizing the doorman who bowed to his toes and the china that had the hammer and sickle on the under side. But Cohen admits his lopsided mistakes with a naïve honesty that is disarming. He registers every mood, from spiritual exhilaration to emotional slobbiness. He was thrilled by Lubertze, the GPU camp for criminals, Dnieprostroy, the wheat, and by many other things.

Lester Cohen, in his intellectual journey, is traveling from the old world to the new, and in this book shows that he is well on his way.

ROBERT GESSNER.

says Beard, "history is viewed as assertion of ideas and interests, antagonisms to ideas and interests thus asserted, and resolution of the conflict by victory and adjustment." No reference is made to dialectic materialism as distinguished from idealism, no mention of Hegel or Marx or Lenin, no application of dialectics ("realistic" or otherwise) to the class struggle. Again the subject is left suspended.

Whoever has read Dr. Beard's earlier historical writings understands that there is a kinship, however distant and unacknowledged, between his "economic interpretation" of American history and the Marxian instrument of historical materialism. In his more recent publications such as *The Open Door at Home*, Dr. Beard appeared anxious to differentiate his own from the Marxist approach. The result was a number of gratuitous digs at a caricature which he labeled Marxism. In the present instance such animosity is lacking. It does not follow, however, that Beard is at last accepting the full implications of his earlier writing. For the volume under review is thin, unsubstantial, and inconclusive. Without trying to predict his next turn, we may still value highly Dr. Beard's past contributions to the understanding of American history as well as his personal record of active opposition to war and the Hearst brand of American fascism. There is plenty of room for him in the developing American People's Front.

ADDISON T. CUTLER.

Historian Looks at History

THE DISCUSSION OF HUMAN AFFAIRS, by Charles A. Beard. Macmillan. \$1.75.

THIS is a light essay by a distinguished American historian. Dr. Beard offers some very general observations on methods and viewpoints concerned in the formation of public opinion on social questions and in the professional writing of history, economics, and the other social studies.

We are told that the discussion of human affairs is an important and widespread activity, that an opinion is not a certainty, that time and place considerations are factors of high condition utterances in this field. Dr. Beard is much more concerned with emphasizing diversity of viewpoints than with presenting his own, unless we consider an enlightened scepticism and a genial eclecticism to be a positive contribution. Most readers, we hope, will not be so easily satisfied.

Speaking as historiographer, Dr. Beard decries of making an exact science of history. Yet he does not hold with the "theorists of chaos" as he terms those who deny any uniformities or determinisms or predictabilities in history. So far, so good. Evidently Dr. Beard is not a complete agnostic. Perhaps history can be made to yield us something objectively valid and useful after all. After reaching the further conclusion that "some conception of the nature of things controls

the selection and organization of recorded facts into written history," Dr. Beard gets down to business by asking what conceptions employed in the past are now available to us. (Here we are hopeful. Perhaps he will take a position on historical materialism, the method and theory of Marx and Lenin.) A six-fold classification yields: (1) the "Jewish-Christian conception of the world and mankind"; (2) the explanation of history in terms of human intelligence used in the attainment of human ends, dubbed the "*Homo sapiens*" view; (3) a pleasure-pain conception in connection with which Beard manages somehow to attribute the idea of the "economic man" both to Adam Smith and to Karl Marx (sic); (4) the superman theory of Carlyle and contemporary fascists; (5) the class conception of history, where Marx is again mentioned but Aristotle receives more space; (6) the idea of progress. Each of these views with one exception receives a paragraph or two of evaluation—its strong and weak sides as they appear to Beard. The exception is the class conception of history. This crucial topic is briefly and inadequately stated and then left suspended in mid-air. The reader is free to guess Dr. Beard's attitude.

At a later point in the argument passing mention is made of the method of "realistic dialectics" which Dr. Beard believes to be of value to the historian. Under this conception,

Flight from Boredom

PEOPLE ARE FASCINATING, by Sally Benson. Covici, Friede. \$2.50.

PANIC AMONG PURITANS, by James Laver. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

MRS. BENSON'S sketches are fascinating, because she does them so unflinchingly well. After you have read a few, you know pretty well what pocket the ball is going to drop into, but you continue to take pleasure in the neat setup, the perfection and economy of detail, the certainty of the final thrust. Her people, on the other hand, unimportant, unpleasantly self-conscious, moving restrictedly in a limited milieu, are very depressing. They are mostly women, often with husbands, seldom with children or jobs, living in small, fairly expensive apartments in New York. They read books from lending libraries, take the "quality" magazines, have conservative opinions and, at second hand, good taste. Their problem is to make something out of nothing, to build lives for themselves that will support their conviction that they are amusing, discerning, generally superior people. So we see them having charming but innocent romances, or giving unusual parties, being whimsical, going to the zoo, buying strange cheeses, straightening out their friends' affairs. And then something happens, something very slight, usually,

and they see that it's all no good, that they really haven't any lives at all. Or if they don't see it, the reader does.

Most of the forty-odd sketches in *People Are Fascinating* are from *The New Yorker*. By contrast, they make the chirrupy brightness of its editorials, the conviction that everything is delightful and absurd at once, particularly dreary. Here the mood seeps through a whole stratum of second-rate people who want to be civilized and sensitive, but have nothing to think about or talk about and spend most of their time getting terribly on each other's nerves. This last effect Mrs. Benson reproduces beautifully; she has a masterly feeling for mannerism and fatuity and cliché. For anyone who has been worrying about the values of the social amenities that might have to be sacrificed to the victory of the proletariat, *People Are Fascinating* should make healthful reading. Even in a classless society people will probably get on each other's nerves occasionally, and say stupid things at parties. But happily the race of women of Mrs. Benson's stories, for whom such matters are of dominant and unrelieved importance, will have disappeared.

Panic among Puritans suggests a different solution to the same problem. Granted that middle-class life is thin and tedious, what we need, James Laver says, is more abandonment, passion, ecstasy. What if the old pagan gods were to come to rule again in England! This exciting possibility he plays with in his novel. To the consternation of the comic rustics, naked naiads and prankish fauns begin to roam the countryside. We meet a selected group of modern Britishers who have very intimate contact with the Olympians. The man-about-town fails as Venus's lover. His mistress is raped by a shower of gold. The heroine escapes from a great swan. The poet visits Hades. And strait-laced Aunt Beryl, the ardent morals crusader, is caught up in the train of Bacchus. But England is too stodgy for the gods, and they depart disappointed. Only Mars is satisfied. *Panic among Puritans* is not really very amusing.

OBED BROOKS.

Brief Reviews

THE ALASKAN MELODRAMA, by J. A. Hellenenthal. Liveright Publishing Co. \$3. Mr. Hellenenthal loves Alaska with an angry and jealous love. And he is highly displeased with the corrupt, shortsighted and cynical way in which American commercial and industrial interests—backed by the government—have squandered Alaskan resources. This book, for all its rather emotional tempo, does give a picture of the history, development and prospects of the Territory which Americans can—and should—read with interest. A good account of the geography and ethnology of the region is followed by chapters on the Russian domination, on the gradual economic and political penetration of the white man; on the major industries (fishing, lumber, mining, the gold rush); on Conservation and its ruinous effects upon the small owners. Mr. Hellenenthal correctly jibes at the recent government attempts to “colonize” desti-

tute Americans in the Territory; “no good government,” he states, “can take the place of bread and butter.” Unfortunately, he falls back upon the entirely inadequate cliché that such government must be one “that conforms to American traditions and American ideals.” And, because the basically sound idea of Conservation broke down under capitalist management is certainly no reason for saying that “the policy of Conservation must be absolutely abandoned.” Once again, political confusion seriously interferes with a clear economic understanding of a vital subject.

HAROLD WARD.

CREATE THE WEALTH? by William Beard. W. W. Norton and Co. \$3. Here is another one of those “land of plenty” books. William Beard, engineer son of historian Charles A. Beard, demonstrates again, by irrefutable technical evidence drawn from every phase of America's gigantic productive apparatus, that there is enough of everything for everybody. As usual, the facts are highly dramatic. Unfortunately, William Beard, being a “Techno-Utopian,” is less successful in his proposed fool-proof plan for distributing this wealth. This plan, which is a combination of private industry, public ownership and government relief, he calls the “public system.” Quietly, without violence, fuss or nonsense, a sort of nationwide T.V.A. would cajole industry into producing an abundance of goods and services; and millions of workers at or below a subsistence level reckoned at about \$500 per year per family, would, with equal efficiency, be geared into the vast machinery of this super-paternalistic State. “Private industry,” we learn, “is to be given a comparatively free hand” in satisfying the needs of the

higher-income groups; all those in lower brackets would be served with a variety of highly standardized goods produced by themselves under a perfect W.P.A. system of job relief. In this way capitalism, by a miraculous jerk on its bootstraps, saves America from both Fascism and Communism.

H. W.

THE INTELLIGENT TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO GERMANY, by I. Burrows. Knight. 35c. In the form of a travel book Mr. Burrows gives an incisive picture of the New Reich, the land of hanc some schools and disemboweled culture. Although the author's chief concern is for the collapse of German art, literature, and science, he doesn't forget the effect upon the German worker of Hitler ersatz capitalism. At Essen, Burrows reviews the munitions works: “Many political observers believe that without their (Herr von Krupp und Bolhle Lablach's and his son-in-law, Herr von Thyssen) support, Adolf Hitler and his Brown Shirts could never have seized power. In turn, the Nazi government's policies have been most favorable to the Ruhr industrialists. On May 2, 1933, the General German Trade Union Association was declared illegal, its leaders arrested, and all the books, bank accounts and records destroyed or confiscated. The expropriation of the rights and properties of a vast group of German people—German trade unionists had more members than those of any other country—was executed by raids, torture, and widespread illegal entries. Then, too, Hitler's aggressive military policy means a flood of orders to the Krupp works for armaments.”

Mr. Burrows as a guide, is a useful supplement to Baedeker.

D. MANNERS.



“Oh Mr. Svenson, have you read *Wake Up and Live?*”

The Case for Modern Music

III—Technique and Temper

THE new composer is at hand. He sees the pressing realities of today's life, he has come to realize the connection between them and his music. His music is addressed no longer exclusively to the installed art-public, superior, very knowing in names and terms, essentially mis-aimed. He has found the new vast wholly untrained ardent public of the masses. They are everywhere, and so he is everywhere. School, church, cabaret, film, club, mass meeting, theater, salon, picnic are all potential arenas for him; he digs his way in and sends his music flying at them. He will not revere or mystify them with abstruse experiments dear to professionals, or unvocal songs, or new orchestral effects filched from this or that ragbag. At the same time he will not just pander to them, he will not give them the *Hearts-and-Flowers* or the *Hungarian-Rhapsody* dregs which have been thrown at them until now, and which they have picked up like hungry dogs. He will write everything, from political songs to chamber music to bugle-fife-and-drum fanfares. He must have an idiom, then, a language, a vehicle which will carry them as well as him; he is to make a strong supple ordered warm music. Is there a formula for this? Is it ultra-modern or anti-modern or what?

The composer is at hand, but the answer isn't. The answer comes out of music, not theories. But before we do any wholesale excommunicating, before in our zeal to clean up the tub we let the baby out with the water, there are a few facts to see.

The contemporary technique in music is (1) bourgeois; (2) scientific; (3) for use, useful.

First, it is certainly bourgeois in its associations. I have said that the innovators probably thought very little about any extra-musical implications of their revolt. They lived in the bourgeois mode, by means of bourgeois transactions. They composed for existing concert audiences or for their own series. Of course they yearned for posterity and universal acclaim; that is artists' pie in the sky. When they turned against smugness and infantile grandeurs, they were revolting in terms of art, not of the social system; and their revolt was disagreeable to, but con-nable within the system. They were the welcome seed in the womb: denied, de-rmed, corseted out of existence; and still living and growing.

When I use the word "scientific" I mean that modern music as a technique is not the personal unrelated idea of some individual. It fits the past, it is the logical next step.

* It is true Erik Satie was a member of the Communist Party at Arcueil, in the Red Belt outside Paris.

I don't want to get too involved about this. I will simply say that the concept of tonality, which runs through all Occidental music, got more and more diffused as Monteverdi was followed (a hundred years later) by Bach, Bach (a hundred years later) by Beethoven, Beethoven (fifty years later) by Wagner; until something we call the chromaticism of Wagner signifies a state of almost total diffusion. Or you can say that a structure becomes so weighted down with elaborations and superimpositions that it collapses from sheer weight. When I say that the historical development tended always towards more elaborations, then it is easy to see the collapse was inevitable, even correct. Atonality, Schönberg's contribution, is the answer, the collapse, the dead-end. . . . Polytonality is more positive, if more synthetic: a counterpoint of chords as inspired by the old classic counterpoint of single musical lines. . . . These are two devices out of a carload of devices. An integration of them all is happening slowly. It is not yet complete, and there are plenty of personal disagreements, and there will continue to be. My own feeling about the value of atonality is that it has punctured the chromatic myth, it has shown it to be sterile, it is once and for all the horrible example. But I don't see how we could have dispensed with atonality.

Modern musical technique is for use. The revolutionary composer inherits it, it is his jumping-off place. He should no more scrap it than a socialist society should scrap a machine because its functioning in a bourgeois system meant abuse or persecution or unemployment. Modern music has often been the vehicle for trivial, stupid, vicious statements; but we don't disdain the radio as a medium because of somebody's toothpaste. Electricity fells trees, it also makes telephones. The technical aspect of present-day music is forward-looking, and actually unrestrainable, like scientific inventions. No matter who evolved it, or under what unsavory circumstances, the point is that it had to be evolved. And listen to *Forward, We've Not Forgotten*, or *Massnahme*, or parts of Weill's *Jasager*, if you want it proved that the technique can be used for a revolutionary statement. It is about time that the doctrine of "original sin" was got rid of.

The technique is above all a kind of musical energy, a specialized twentieth-century kind. There is a body of materials, an equipment, a way of expressing which belongs to our time and to no other. Behind the mannerisms and stenciled dissonances and hash of styles there are the elements of a musical speech. And also of a temper. Certain things are gone from music because of

the modern movement: effusiveness, overstatement, windiness. Certain things have arrived: directness, economy, clarity. Music heaves and sweats much less. It has thrown off the airless bunchy petticoats and the scented dry-goods roses of the late nineteenth-century composers. It is in a way ripe for revolutionary treatment.

I am as aware as anybody that the new music of the masses is not going to be the music of Schönberg or Stravinsky or Hindemith. But they were preparing the way. Schönberg, developing a method out of atonality, implanted a discipline and logic; terribly important, especially for those young proletarian composers who are quite sure they can get along on "instinct" and "intuition." His role is negative, but it is honorable, prophylactic. Stravinsky is an enormous contribution, and an involuntary one. He has pared music down to the essentials, he has brought in order, he has insisted on a communicable speech. On the other hand he has landed in a bog of hyper-esthetic tendencies, snobbish and ingrown in message and character. In a world of cataclysmic unrest and change, he appears to be saying, "We can at least play at tiddlywinks like gentlemen." Hindemith is too deeply academic, too little lyric; yet in his propaganda work for *Gebrauchsmusik* he is a link to the new period. There are also Milhaud, Berg, Prokofieff, and others. Most of the others wrote music which is full of talent, and not so full of character. They have done small necessary jobs. That they were unconsciously preparing the way, beginning something whose counterparts and possibilities they did not dream of, was none of their business. It is distinctly ours, who appraise them in order to use them; who digest in order to eliminate, but also to absorb.

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The Screen

On Calling Names

MR. J. A. BAUER of Brooklyn takes me to task for praising Spencer Tracy's performance in *San Francisco*. He says in part: "I sincerely hope that Tracy receives the Academy award—if only to cement the united front of Ellis and the Legion of Decency. The picture is pure boloney. Tracy's performance is not MAGNIFICENT—it is no better than his performance in *Riff Raff*—a picture you asked us to avoid. How come?"

There are over 550 feature films manufactured every year—most of them in Hollywood. At the end of the year the critics have a difficult time selecting ten good films to make up their "ten best" list. Out of those ten there aren't two movies that are really memorable. Last year there was only one: *The Informer*. Consequently it is a little obvious to call the commercial film "pure boloney." But at that, I was careful to indicate that *San Francisco* was a "pseudo-epic of civic and ecclesiastical proportions."

As to Spencer Tracy's performance: that is a matter of opinion which is conditioned by the critic's knowledge of the medium, of the craft, and by his taste. It is possible that my use of the word "magnificent" was a little out of proportion to the size of the review and consequently seemed like overpraise. However, it is my contention that when an actor can create a character that is believable and human from a role that lent itself to easy overacting, in a film so full of hokum and artificiality, he deserves special tribute. Are we to condemn Tracy's performance in *San Francisco* just because the priest he portrays is an objectionable social character and because Tracy played the lead in the reactionary film *Riff Raff*? On the same score it would have been logical to say that Victor McLaglen's portrayal of Gyppo in *The Informer* was horrible because in private life the actor is a reactionary and nurses pretentious fascist aspirations. Getting back to Tracy it should be remembered that he also played the lead in *Fury* and that the same man is also a member of the executive board of the Screen Actors Guild—one of the most militant trade unions in Hollywood.

After all, an actor is an artist, a craftsman. And, in the final analysis, a worker. Ninety-nine percent of the actors have no voice in the kind of roles they are to play or in the selection of their stories. When John Ford wanted Tracy to play the lead in the famous *The Plough and Stars*, a play about the Irish revolution, Metro wouldn't release him. RKO thought that they wanted to reserve Tracy for an important film of their own. But it developed that Metro just didn't want Tracy to appear in that film—they lent him to another company for a mediocre film.

Only someone unacquainted with the make-

up of the motion picture industry would blame its reactionary policy on its workers, artists and technicians. The person who has direct control in a film is the producer. And just how unconscious they are of world politics is clearly illustrated in the case of Mr. Walter Wanger, who has just announced that he is going to make films for Mussolini.

In reviewing *The President Vanishes* last year, I referred to its producer as "the fascist Walter Wanger." The title was not only based on Mr. Wanger's current film, but went back to the time when he produced for William Randolph Hearst the notorious *Gabriel Over the White House*. Some of my friends in the New York office of Paramount complained that I was always looking for trouble. That Mr. Wanger was really not a fascist, but just a bright young Dartmouth man who always wanted to do something "different" in films. To a certain extent that was true: he did produce *Mary Burns, Fugitive* and the first Technicolor production to be made outdoors: *The Trail of the Lone-some Pine*. Then for the rest of the season this Park Avenue intellectual began to concern himself chronically with gangsters and the plight of the poor but well-meaning rich. And one of the last films he produced this season was *Palm Springs*, which reached an all-time low for the motion picture industry—even by Hollywood standards.

So he went to Italy for a "much-needed rest" and came back with a fascist contract. You might think that he was just in it for the money. But in an interview published in the July 8 issue of *Variety*, Wanger sheds

crocodile tears for Il Duce: "Italy has been hurt that we have an unfair attitude toward fascism, that we don't understand that Italy wants to help the Ethiopians, that the Ethiopians welcomed [!] the Italian armies and went gladly over to their side." Mr. Wanger continues: "Italy seeks to correct the wrong impressions other nations have formed about it by means of Italian-made pictures, pictures that shall express Italy's point of view. Italy shall be sold to the world . . . by means of Italian-made pictures." Thus does Mr. Wanger complete his road to Rome. I don't think Mr. Wanger's films (even those made locally) will get a polite reception. And they will contain actors on whom we can't blame the film's policy. Wanger claims that his initial Italian production will star Sylvia Sydney. She also played in *Fury*. I don't know if Miss Sydney's contract with Wanger compels her to make films for Mussolini, but the Screen Actors Guild should know. Here is their opportunity to take a positive stand on their avowed anti-fascist platform.

PETER ELLIS.

Current Films

Early to Bed (Paramount): Charlie Ruggles is a sensitive and genuine comedian. When a few years ago he and Mary Boland were first cast as the middle-aged inhibited couple they made film history. Their early films were sensitive comments on the great American lower middle class. This current vehicle has the same frame. The plot revolves around a middle-aged man who has been engaged to a middle-class woman for twenty years. He hesitates to marry because of his "great secret." This "secret" is sleep walking. Finally they marry and the couple land in a psychiatric rest home. What follows is very enjoyable and funny. The film just misses being a biting satire on psychiatry, rest homes, summer resorts, and insane asylums.

Meet Nero Wolfe (Columbia): Based on Rex Stout's famous detective who was grotesquely fat,

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misery, and curiously had a passion for the sensitive and delicate orchid. It is directed by Herbert Biberman, who is best known for his work on *Roar, China!* and who naively discovered the first principles of the cinema in an article in the current issue of *New Theater*. Mr. Biberman's direction is dull and mechanical. It has the worst fault of any mystery film: no pace and all talk. The only movement in the film is in the transitions and they have no relation to the story. On the whole the conception is literary rather than dramatic and cinematic. Edward Arnold as Nero Wolfe, the armchair detective, is the same man he was in *Diamond Jim Brady*, et al. And Lionel Stander is just his stooge.

White Fang (20th Century-Fox): Only dog lovers will like this film. Movie fans will be bored by the same old story of the he-man who was rescued by a dog against the snow-capped mountains of Alaska.

Anna (Amkino-Cameo): In the Soviet Union this film was released under the title *The Party Ticket*, which was more descriptive than its present more romantic caption. Although the triangle love story is an essential part of the plot, the film is more concerned with the dramatization of intimate details in the everyday life of Party members in the U.S.S.R. The story concentrates upon the efforts of a ruthless saboteur to gain admittance to the Communist Party to conduct wrecking activities in a military industry. There are several clever characterizations (even the worst Soviet films are blessed with them), but, on the whole, *Anna* is hampered by a clumsy scenario, inept direction, and a technically poor production. But because it deals with a phase of Soviet life not found in news dispatches, the film is recommended. P. E.

Between Ourselves

Sensational revelations from the steel-mill towns, having an important bearing on the presidential election campaign and the rise of American fascism, are contained in the story by Marguerite Young which will appear next week. Miss Young phoned by long distance, just as we were going to press, to ask whether we couldn't hold up the issue for this story. We said *THE NEW MASSES*, like the U. S. Mail, must be on time. But watch for her story.

The second and concluding part of R. Palme Dutt's "Britain at the Crossroads" will appear in these pages next week.

In "Our Readers' Forum" in this number we publish a letter telling about the difficulties of getting workers' parties on the ballot in certain states. We would like to hear from other quarters about *this* year's troubles in that respect—especially news telling how you beat the official attempts at disfranchisement.

Joseph Freeman and Eric Bernay of *THE NEW MASSES* staff will speak under the auspices of the Newark, N. J., Friends of *THE NEW MASSES*, at the Russian Corner, Woodstock, N. Y., Saturday evening, July 25, at 8:30 p. m.

Have you read the message in the advertisement headed "One moment, please," on page 2? We think you might be interested.

Readers are again notified that J. Yaeger is no longer authorized to represent *THE NEW MASSES* as a subscription solicitor or in any other capacity.

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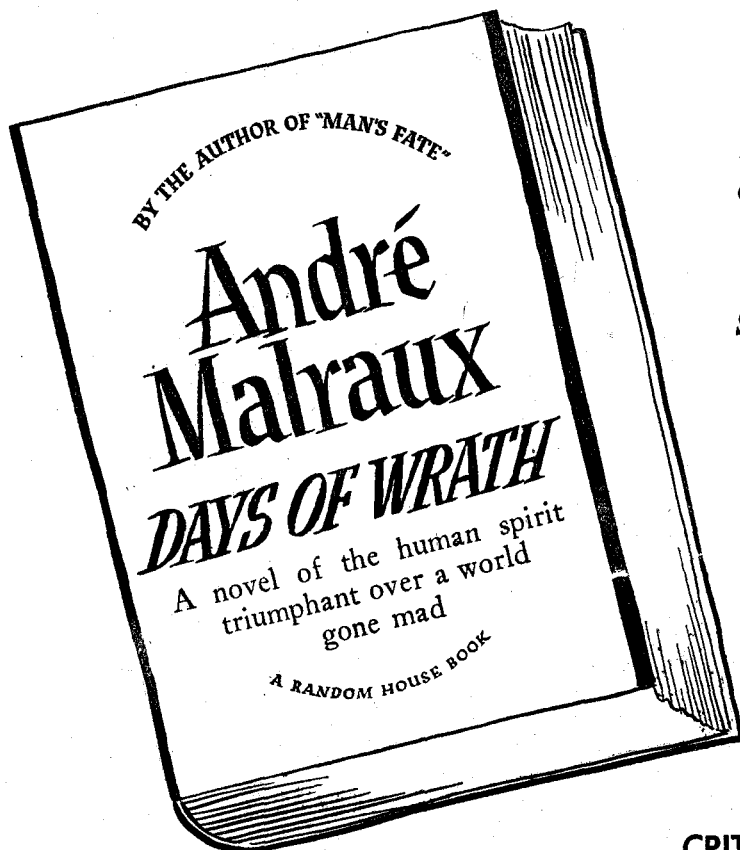
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